

in the area... Beginning of railway. road transportation of the 155th and 55th divisions - from the morning of M-4 after their mobilization ... ". And

now let's compare this with the order of the headquarters of the Western OVO dated June 21, 1941:

"To the commander of the 47th Rifle Corps ...

Send the command and units by rail in trains No. 17401 - 17408 at a rate of 4. Start of transportation on 23.6.41. Ensure loading on time according to the plan. Keep the move secret.

Do not indicate the destination station in the transportation documents ... ".

There is a note on the document: *"Similar instructions on 21.6.41 were given to the commanders of the 17th Rifle Division, the*

121st Rifle Division ...". (52, p. 12) Putting together these scattered pieces of extremely important information, we come to the conclusion that on June 21-22, 1941, events took place that can be interpreted as a "secret and partial" introduction of the cover plan, which took place on June 19-22, 1941 . **June 20th**. No less indicative are other decisions and actions of the Soviet command, which - although they cannot be specifically "tied" to the currently known operational plans - unequivocally testify to intense preparations for hostilities. To hostilities that may begin not sometime in 1942 and not even at the end of the summer of 1941, but in the very next few days. For example, here are the orders and orders issued by the command of the Baltic OVO (temporary dates are underlined by me. - M.S.)

Order of the commander of the Baltic OVO No. 0052 dated June 15, 1941 *"... Prepare*

*the installation of anti-tank mines and wire obstacles in front of the front edge of the fortified zone in such a way that a minefield is established within three hours ... Begin to install wire obstacles immediately ... From the first hour of **combat actions** , organize the protection of their rear, and immediately detain all persons who inspire suspicion and quickly establish their identity ... Disperse and camouflage aircraft at airfields in forests, bushes, preventing formation in a line, but at the same time maintaining full readiness to take off. Parks of tank units and artillery should be dispersed, placed in forests, carefully camouflaged, while maintaining the opportunity to assemble in a timely manner.*

alarm ... The commander of the army, the commander of the corps and division to draw up a calendar plan for the implementation of the order, which must be fully completed by **June 25 of this year.**

G." (50, pp. 11-12) Directive of the Military Council of the Baltic OVO No. 00224 of 15 June 1941

*"In the event that the enemy violates the border, a sudden attack by his large forces or the flight of the border by an air force, I establish the following notification procedure ... Send a report simultaneously by radio, telephone, telegraph, by plane and by a delegate by car, with the aim of informing the Military Council of the district as soon as possible ... Reports send by radio in clear text, it must be preceded by the password "ELEPHANT" and a number that encrypts the position of the informer ... To verify the authenticity of the report, it must end with the review "SHELL". The report must be sent through radio stations 11-AK or RSB on wave 156. For timely receipt of the report, the receivers of all formation headquarters from **17.6.41** must be on wave 156 ...*

*" (50, pp. 11-12) Order of the Commander of the Baltic OVO No. 00229 dated June 1941 "... To the head of the air defense zone **by the end of June 19, 1941,** put the entire*

*air defense of the district on full combat readiness ... **By July 1, 1941,***

*complete the construction of command posts, starting from the battery (anti-aircraft) commander to the brigade commander area (air defense) ... Not later than **the morning of 20.6.41,** to the front and army command posts, throw out teams with the necessary property to organize communication centers on them ...*

*Systematically check communication with command posts ... Organize and systematically check the work of radio stations according to the schedule approved by me ... Outline and prepare teams of signalmen who should be ready by the morning of 20.6.41, **by** order of the formation commanders, to take control of the communication centers approved by me ... Determine on the site of each army, points for the organization of field warehouses of anti-tank mines, explosives and anti-personnel barriers. To concentrate the indicated property in organized warehouses **by 21.6.41** Create in Telsiai, Siauliai, Kaunas and*

in the Kalvary directions, mobile detachments of mine anti-tank warfare. For this purpose, to have stocks of anti-tank mines transported by road. Readiness of detachments 21.6.41.... The plan for the destruction of bridges is to be approved by the military councils of the armies. Deadline 21.6.41. Select from the parts of the district (except mechanized and aviation) all gas tanks and transfer them 50% each to the 3rd and 12th mechanized corps. Completion date 21.6.41" (50, pp. 22–25) On the cover of Combat

Documents Compilation No. 34 (from which these orders are quoted) is a blue stamp: "Declassified." Number of the Directive of the General Staff on declassification and date: 30.11.65, 1965. For decades, the shamans of the official military-historical "science" knew - or, at least, should have known - the contents of the documents of June 1941, but at the same time they continued to tell us stories about a "sudden attack" and "a peacefully sleeping Soviet country..." . Unfortunately, SBD

No. 34 is the only collection of combat documents of the districts (fronts) that included at least several documents from the period before June 22, 1941. All other collections (as well as all the TsAMO funds available to independent researchers) begin immediately with June 22, with the "surprise attack". Everything that preceded this terrible "surprise" was safely passed over in silence. But there are no rules without exceptions. In SBD No. 33 (combat documents of mechanized corps), the order of the commander of the 12th MK Shestopalov No. 0033 dated June 18 was somehow "messed up" (and not even at the very beginning, but in eighth place, after the documents of July 1941). The document is marked "Top Secret. Of particular importance", which is a rarity for corpus-level documents. Order No. 0033 begins with these words: "With *the receipt of this order, put all units on alert. **Put the units on alert in accordance with the plans for raising the alert, but do not announce the alarm itself*** (emphasized by me. - M.S.) ... Take with you only what is necessary for life and battle. Next comes the instruction to begin at 23.00 on June 18 the advance to the areas of concentration, and all the final points of the routes are in the forests! (63, pp. 23–24)

The 12th mechanized corps was also part of the troops of the Baltic OVO, but I do not see the slightest reason to consider the situation in the Baltic OVO to be somehow unique. It's just that in other districts, the relevant documents either disappeared, or were destroyed in a timely manner, or were conscientiously classified. The commander of the troops of the Baltic OVO (North-Western Front) F. I. Kuznetsov, as well as his naval namesake N. G. Kuznetsov, as well as the commander of the troops of the 3rd Army V. I. Kuznetsov, no "orders Stalin" did not arbitrarily violate, but acted in strict accordance with the instructions that they received from Moscow. Exactly the same as in the Baltic District, orders to bring troops on high alert, to mask airfields and disperse aircraft, to withdraw headquarters to field command posts and deploy radio communications according to the combat schedule were given in all other border districts. If at dawn on June 22, 1941, something "unexpected" happened for the middle and senior command personnel, then this **stunning surprise was the absence of an order to start hostilities**. For some reason, the long-awaited "ELEPHANT" was late ... Moreover, literally 1-2 days before the actual start of the war, the "elephant" was actively interfered with. Without

exaggeration, mysterious events began to occur in the troops of the western border districts, which can hardly be described otherwise than as a deliberate reduction in combat readiness. There are few facts of this kind, they are scattered mainly in memoirs and therefore can cause a certain distrust. Nevertheless, one cannot ignore the numerous testimonies of the participants in the events. This is all the more true in a situation where the lack of strictly documentary evidence is caused primarily by the lack of access to the relevant archival funds. In the most "stagnant years" (in 1977), the memoirs of Colonel Belov, the commander of one of the three defeated air divisions (10th SAD) of the Western Front, were published

about the first day of the war. (54) The title of the essay is "Hot Hearts". The tone of the story is in line with the title. Nevertheless, completely unexpected information fit on five pages of text:

"... On June 20, I received a telegram with an order from the commander of the district air force: to put the units on alert, to prohibit vacations for command personnel, to recall those on vacation to units ... Regimental commanders also received my order: disperse aircraft beyond the borders of the airfield, personnel from the camp location do not let go..."

There is nothing sensational in this evidence. True, it completely contradicts the traditional myth of "peacefully sleeping airfields", but it completely coincides in content with all the documents of the last pre-war days. The amazing comes later, **at 4 p.m. on June 21**. At a time when the roar of thousands of engines of German troops advancing towards the Bug was already being heard with the naked ear, the commander of the 10th SAD received a new encryption from the district headquarters: the order on June 20 to bring the units to full combat readiness and ban vacations was canceled ! Colonel Belov writes that he did not even begin to bring such an order to his subordinates - but why was such an order given? We find indirect confirmation of the reliability of the testimony of Colonel Belov in the

memoirs of Lieutenant Colonel P. Tsupko, who before the war was a young pilot in the bomber regiment (13th BAP) of the same Western district (front). Here is what he writes: *"... On Sunday, June 22, a day off was announced in the 13th air regiment. Everyone was delighted: they didn't rest for three months ... On Saturday evening, leaving behind the senior chief of the operator of the headquarters of Captain Vlasov, the command of the air regiment, many pilots and technicians left for their families in Russia ... The entire air garrison remained in the care of the internal service, which was headed by the junior lieutenant on duty for the camp collection (!!!)*

Usenko..." (55) The strange events in the Western OVO were not limited to aviation alone. Immediately before the start of hostilities, the district command gathered the anti-aircraft artillery of the armies of the first echelon for the district assembly. (56)

In particular, from the memoirs of the commander of the 86th SD (10th Army) Zashibalov, it follows that the anti-aircraft division of his division was at the beginning of the war at a training ground 130 km from the location of the division. The anti-aircraft divisions of the 6th mechanized corps and the entire 4th Army were not near the border, from which the Germans removed the wire barriers,

and at the district training ground near the village of Krupki, 120 kilometers east of Minsk. General of the Army S.P. Ivanov (before the war - head of the operational department of the headquarters of the 13th Army of the Western OVO) gives a very interesting explanation for such actions of our command:

*"...Stalin sought by the very state and behavior of the troops of the border districts **to make it clear to Hitler that calm reigns in our country, if not carelessness** (a strange desire for someone who is afraid of an enemy attack. - M.S.). And this was done, as they say, in the most natural form. For example, the anti-aircraft units were at the training camp ... As a*

result, instead of using skillful disinformation actions to mislead the aggressor about the combat readiness of our troops, we actually reduced it to an extremely low degree ... "(47) The "big theater evening" that took place deserves

attention . June 21, 1941 It is known that the command of the Western OVO spent the evening of June 21 in the Minsk House of Officers, on the stage of which the comedy "Wedding in Malinovka" was playing. Only the laziest did not "kick" Pavlov because, instead of putting the troops on alert, he went to have fun. Even the simple thought that after reading the intelligence report of June 21 ("the main part of the German army in the strip against the Western Special Military District took its original position ...") it was necessary to relax (assuming that Pavlov had just such a desire) is no longer in the theater , did not occur to our childishly naive journalists ... Another thing is more interesting - even a cursory look at the memorial literature makes it possible to make sure that not only Pavlov went on a "cult trip" on the evening of June 21.

"... On Saturday, June 21, 1941, a team of artists headed by the famous Belarusian composer Lyuban arrived at our air garrison from Minsk. Not so often we were indulged in the attention of theatrical artists, so the House of the Red Army was overcrowded. The concert dragged on. It was already past midnight when we, having sincerely thanked our dear guests, sent them back to Minsk..." (57) Commander of the 13th BAD (Western OVO) F. P. Polynin.

"... On Saturday, June 21, the forty-first year, in the garrison House of the Red Army, as usual, an evening took place. The Red Army Song and Dance Ensemble arrived from the district. After the concert, according to the hospitable army tradition, the corps commander, Lieutenant General Dmitry Ivanovich Ryabyshev, and I invited the members of the ensemble to dinner. I returned home only at three o'clock in the morning ... " (58) Commissioner of the 8th MK (Kiev OVO) N.K. Popel.

"...21 June deputy commander of the 98th long-range bomber regiment for political affairs, battalion commissar Vasily Egorovich Molodtsov invited me to the Shatalov airfield, where an evening of amateur performances was to be held at the local House of the Red Army ... The audience received the artists with captivating cordiality, and the evening of amateur performances, which took place on the very eve of the war, will be remembered many. People dispersed, animatedly discussing the most successful numbers of the concert. At about 22:30 I also left, taking with me the warmth of this wonderful evening. Arrived in Smolensk at night. According to the established procedure, I went to the headquarters ... " (59) The commander of the 3rd long-range bomber corps N. S. Skripko. *"... On the evening of June 21, we were with the whole family in*

the theater. Together with us in the box was the head of the political department of the army, also with his family. After Returning home from the theater, at two in the morning I was called to the headquarters of the division, where I received an order to announce a combat alert in the regiment ... " (60) Commander of the 57th tank regiment (29th TD, 11th MK, Western OVO) I. G. Cheryapkin:

"... I have one nice suggestion: at eight o'clock on the open stage of the House of the Red Army there will be a performance by artists of the Belarusian Operetta Theater - let's see ...

"With pleasure," I agreed. - I hope that the performance of the Minsk operetta will be no worse than the concert of Moscow pop artists in Brest, to which Shlykov and Rozhkov went.

- Gave out! The commander laughed. - And I don't know what they are so eager to get to Brest..." (61)

This is the chief of staff of the 4th Army (Western OVO) L. M. Sandalov retelling a conversation that he had on the evening of June 21, 1941 with Commander Korobkov. And Shlykov, who went to a concert in Brest, is a member of the Military Council of the 4th Army. from Brest to

Kobrin is only 45 km away, so by midnight everyone gathered at the army headquarters (*"The senior command staff of the army administration spent the last pre-war night in the army headquarters. In a nervous, anxious state, we walked from room to room, discussing the crisis situation in an undertone. Through every hour they called the Brest border guard detachment and the division ..."*)

This day, June 21, 1941, turned out to be such a strange one for many commanders of the Red Army. **In the evening, in front of the public, in the theater. Late at night - at the headquarters, at the telephone.** What was it?

Extra chapter

“On the evening of June 21, all members of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks were in Stalin's office. Molotov, Voroshilov, Malenkov, Beria and others were seated at a long table covered with green cloth in a huge room with a high vaulted ceiling, with walls sheathed in light oak panels to the height of a man, at a long table covered with green cloth. There was a tense silence in the office. Everyone was waiting for what Stalin would say. He, with an unlit pipe in his hands, slowly walked along a long carpet path ... Finally, Stalin spoke: “The situation is aggravating every day, and it looks very likely that we may be subjected to a surprise attack from Germany ... Tell me, Comrade Timoshenko, how many troops we have located in the western border military districts? (60)

I confess - every time I read this, I experienced an attack of burning (and somewhere even unworthy) envy. But why? Why is it possible for everyone to do this, but not for me? Why should I blind my eyes for months, specifying the numbers of regiments and the exact date of their advancement to height 238/6?

And just today it finally dawned on me - you can! Who said you can't? SO:

On the evening of June 21, 1941, in Stalin's office, in a huge room with a high vaulted ceiling, with walls sheathed in light oak panels the height of a man, two people were sitting at a long table covered with green cloth: People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR Timoshenko and Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army of Zhukov. There was a tense silence in the office. Stalin with an extinct pipe in his hands walked slowly along a long carpeted path. Beria's pince-nez gleamed in the far corner of the office. Finally, the Boss spoke: *“We must remember the most important thing - the philosophy of Lenin. It has not been*

surpassed, and it would be good if our Bolsheviks assimilated this philosophy, which fundamentally contradicts philistine philosophy. Why did the German generals send this sergeant major to us? Because they are afraid of the might of the Red Army and

they want to provoke us to a premature transition to the offensive. That's why they sent us a defector with a false message that the war will start tomorrow. It is they who want us to start the war tomorrow, so that we go on the offensive before the completion of the mobilization of the army, before the completion of the concentration of troops, before the front of the reserve armies of Comrade Budyonny reaches the Dnieper. That's what the German generals want, and that's what you, comrade Zhyukov, want to provoke the Central Committee. But the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party is not so easily provoked, as our enemies think about it... Why should we not

believe this turncoat? Because Hitler is not such a fool not to understand that the Soviet Union is not Poland, it is not France, it is not even England and all of them put together. Hitler knows that the regrouping of German troops to our borders is far from over. It can be said that it only really began two weeks ago. With the forces that the Germans concentrated in the East, it was possible to attack France - although they collected more aircraft against France - but not against the mighty Soviet Union. Now that we have reconstructed our army, saturated it with equipment for modern combat, when we have become strong, now Hitler will not dare to launch an offensive before he has gathered 200-220 divisions at our borders. Hitler will not risk launching an offensive without strong air support. Whoever is strong in the air is generally strong, and he also understands this. In the meantime, the forces of German aviation, concentrated on the airfields of the former Poland and East Prussia, cannot be compared with our Air Force. Hitler is not such a fool as to embark on an adventure.

Therefore, we must, without succumbing to any provocations, complete the strategic deployment of our army. As you already know, on Monday, June 23, general mobilization will be announced. Aviation of the western districts will begin an operation to destroy German aircraft at airfields and destroy communications in the operational rear of the enemy. We will not allow the Germans to gather 200 divisions near our borders. If the aviation works well, we will be able to launch Grozu no later than July 1, while having a significant superiority in forces. It is necessary to beat the enemy with a strong fist. What you are proposing now is simply to push the Germans

outstretched palm. The Central Committee will not agree to such stupidity ...
"

Stalin fell silent, went up to the table, opened a box of Herzegovina Flor cigarettes. With his smoky yellow fingers he broke several cigarettes, stuffed his pipe, and slowly lit a cigarette. Dead silence hung under the high vaulted ceiling. Beria's pince-nez sparkled even brighter. "We are listening to you, Comrade Zhyukov," Stalin again softly walked along the carpet. "What can you say in your own defense?" The general of the army stood up,

straightened his tunic and with a firm plus
minted:

"Comrade Stalin! Intelligence reports that Hitler considers our invincible Red Army a colossus with feet of clay. I think intelligence is wrong. Hitler calls our army "a clay colossus without a head."

That is, hundreds of our divisions, tens of thousands of our tanks, he equates to a children's clay toy, and he considers me, Comrade Timoshenko and you, Comrade Stalin, just empty places. I think Hitler is right.

Already the Finnish war has shown that our allegedly invincible Red Army is a huge and almost uncontrollable armed crowd. To achieve the most minimal successes on the front of the war with the Finnish White Guards, we had to create a fivefold advantage in manpower, an overwhelming superiority in artillery, tanks and aircraft. But we do not have the opportunity to create such an overwhelming numerical superiority over the German army on a huge front from the Black Sea to the Baltic. Our army is half-starved and almost untrained collective farm peasants who hate you fiercely, Comrade Stalin. After the very first defeats - and they are inevitable when confronted with such an enemy as the German Wehrmacht - our army will begin to rapidly turn from an armed crowd into an unarmed crowd, which, guarded by a dozen German escorts, will go to surrender. An unprecedented military catastrophe awaits us. The size and outcome of this catastrophe depend mainly on whether Hitler is an idiot or not.

"What do you mean, Comrade Zhyukov?" - out of surprise, Stalin even stopped his endless march around a huge table covered with green cloth.

"I report to the Central Committee that our military intelligence has obtained part of the text of Keitel's order, which establishes the procedure for dealing with captured political workers of the Red Army. Keitel demands that they be separated from the rest of the prisoners of war. But we still do not know - why separate? Our agent, Eustas Aleksovich Stirlitz, has already been instructed to get the full text of the notorious "order on commissars" at any cost. If Hitler is an idiot, then the political workers of the Red Army will be shot. This will force them to fight themselves and merciless executions to force ordinary Red Army soldiers to fight. If Hitler is not an idiot, then the captured political workers will be separated from the main mass in order to feed them steaks, drink trophy French cognac and agitate for joining the National Socialist Party, while promising warm places in the occupation administration. With this scenario, I consider it possible for the German divisions to reach the Arkhangelsk-Astrakhan line by the end of this summer.

"This is what they will come out on," Beria said from the corner, "you can't walk so much with your feet, but they have a cat of motorized divisions cried..."

"They didn't ask you, smart guy," Timoshenko rumbled in a cold bass voice, "they will pass, as the White Czechs did in the summer of 1918, on trains with songs."

"Wait, Lavrenty," notes of lively interest were heard in Stalin's voice, "what do you propose, Comrade Zhukov? Answer directly and honestly, like a communist to a communist."

Zhukov threw a cursory glance at Timoshenko, but he remained silent, majestic and motionless, like Scythian burial mounds. Zhukov cleared his throat and uttered impossible words: "I report.

The emergency situation, the unprecedented threat looming over our Motherland, requires the adoption of extraordinary measures. First and foremost: it is necessary to immediately arrest and bring to justice the worst enemies of the people, the vile agents of the Abwehr and the Gestapo

Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, Beria. Consideration of cases should be carried out in accordance with the law of December 1, 1934, without summoning those arrested, without bringing charges, a decision to end the investigation and an indictment, with the application of an exceptional measure of punishment to exposed enemies of the people - public execution on a stake. The sentence is to be carried out at the Execution Ground in Moscow. Following this, it

is necessary to openly terminate all agreements with fascist Germany concluded by the criminal anti-Party clique of Stalin-Molotov, and turn to Great Britain and the North American United States with a proposal to create an anti-Hitler coalition. In the field of domestic policy, the first task of the All-Union Emergency Committee (VChK) will be the release of the prisoners of the Gulag, the organized dissolution of collective farms and the return of land plots to the labor use of the peasants ... "" It would be nice to invite Churchill as prime minister. Do not agree

he," Timoshenko said thoughtfully.

Stalin dropped the phone. Softly stepping in his Caucasian boots without heels along the carpet, he approached a huge secret map on the wall and pulled it with a black velvet curtain. Then, silently and slowly, he sealed the map with his personal seal and sat at the head of a huge table covered with green cloth. Looking with unblinking yellow eyes at Zhukov, he said quietly and clearly, without any accent:

"For us Bolshevik-Leninists, the interests of the cause are higher than personal insults. Tell me, Comrade Zhukov, after the execution of Comrade Stalin, will the Red Army win with little bloodshed? In a foreign land?

Zhukov started to get up, but then Timoshenko pressed his overly talkative chief of staff into an armchair with a huge five, and, without getting up, spoke himself:

"We will not succeed with little bloodshed. The soldier is not trained. And I don't want to talk about our generals. Your work, Gutsin, you selected these sycophants and raised them from rags to riches. Of course, as soon as we dissolve the collective farms and return the innocent from Kolyma, the people will breathe differently. With a different heart, he will go to war. Yes, only one courage now does not take the city. Another war is the war of motors, the war of technology. People need to be prepared for years. What do we have? We produce the most oil in Europe, and the training raid of pilots

limited by limits on gasoline. We made tanks - mountains, but we save motor resources for training mechanics. We went to the Baltic States last summer - shame, almost half of the tanks on the roads were broken. And this is without an enemy, without bombing ... Why, tanks - machine gunners shot three times in the field for three years of service, and the rest of the time was spent on household work and lectures about the party of Lenin Stalin ... No, we won't get by with little blood. Both victories and defeats will be dear to us ... "

Stalin again walked around the office, went to his desk, for a long time and silently twisted a sharply sharpened red pencil in his hands. Then he turned to the military and yelled:

"So, it means that Lavrenty and I are on the stake, right? Me on the stake, huh? Right now! Scared the hedgehog with his bare ass! Yes, I'm not like you, torn

bitches, I lowered below the bucket .. " Beria took off his pince-nez and with desperate determination began to gnaw at the light oak panel in the corner of the office. The dumbfounded military looked with amazement at the Great Leader of the Peoples, the Best Friend of Athletes, who at dizzying speed turned into an ordinary camp godfather. And at this moment...

And at that moment something crackled, hissed, the scale of the radio receiver lit up with green light, and Levitan's voice, the unique, the only voice, filled the huge office

**"ATTENTION ATTENTION
SAYS MOSCOW**

**ALL RADIO STATIONS OF THE SOVIET UNION WORK WE
TRANSMIT URGENT MESSAGE AT THE
LAST HOUR As it**

*became known from the message of the corrupt and deceitful bourgeois agencies Gavas and Reuters, today at two o'clock in the afternoon, the Reich Chancellor of Germany, a great friend of the Soviet Union, shot himself in his office, once swashbuckler leader bloodthirsty clique of fascist rulers Comrade Hitler. The reasons that prompted Hitler to commit suicide are still unknown. In a suicide note addressed to the leader of the Italian fascists, Benito Mussolini, the following is said verbatim:
"Duce, I am writing this to you*

letter at the moment when months of hard thinking ended in the most difficult decision of my life.

"Yes, a decision," muttered Beria in the corner. He had stopped chewing on the panel and was now crawling across the floor looking for his pince-nez. Levitan's voice continued

to hum like alarm copper: *"In the diplomatic circles of Berlin, they believe that yesterday's report by General Guderian, in which he told Hitler the exact number of Soviet tanks and tank divisions, could be the reason for the suicide. At the same time, a Berlin correspondent for the Washington Post, that deceitful mouthpiece of the Wall Street financial tycoons, claims that Hitler shot himself entangled in his sabotage connections with the petty-bourgeois artist Eva Braun ... "*

Four people in a huge office with a high vaulted ceiling turned into hearing, which had an extremely negative effect on other senses: sight and smell. No one noticed how the green carpet caught fire from Stalin's smoking pipe, how the flames began to lick the heavy curtains on the windows. Clouds of smoke filled the office, and only the pendulum of the ancient clock of history indifferently beat off the last minutes of Saturday, June 21, 1941 ...

And at that time, the squares of Moscow were unusually crowded. The sweltering heat that hung over the city all day receded only at midnight, and now the scent of flowering lindens lured Muscovites out into the street. Crowds of tenth-graders, completely indifferent to the fabrications and reports of Havas and Reuters, hurried to clarify with the tenth-graders the questions that concern them - the metropolitan schools held graduation parties that day. The walking public filled the parapets of the Moskva River embankment, and every second one considered it his duty to pay attention to the unquenchable light in one of the Kremlin windows. "This is the office of Comrade Stalin, where he thinks about our national happiness all night long!" Everyone first thought that the Kremlin's outhouse was most likely the inextinguishable office, but tried not

to say it out loud. *"Daddy, daddy!"* - the children's voice sounded especially bright in the silence of the night. - *Dad, look! Smoke from Comrade Stalin*

knocks down! The father of an overly big-eyed child looked around frightened and dragged his daughter away from people. "Well, what, what, why are you screaming like that ... Well, smoke, haven't you seen smoke? There is no smoke without fire... It means that Comrade Stalin burned down at work..."

Chapter 12

HYPOTHESIS #3

The strange events of the last pre-war days can nevertheless be explained, linked into a single logical chain within the framework of a certain hypothesis. I must immediately admit that the Kiev historian Keystut Zakoretsky was the first to put forward this hypothesis. The main argument that he cited in support of it is rather doubtful, but since it is precisely within the framework of his hypothesis that the known facts fit very clearly - like cartridges in a clip - I am ready not only to fully agree with Zakoretsky, but also to try to creatively develop this version of events. So, suppose that in mid-June

(somewhere between the 10th and 20th), the date for the start of the invasion of Europe **was changed once more** (the first postponement took place in April - May 1941), and again towards the approach of the date start of the war. This, the third in order and the last in reality, Stalin's calendar plan for the start of the war looked as follows: 1. On a bright sunny day on **June 22, one (or a**

whole series) of provocations takes place - a staging of the bombing of Soviet cities by German aircraft. 2. Immediately after this **(on the afternoon or evening**

of June 22) the cover plan is put into action. It is being introduced in full - including the actions of the Red Army Air Force on objects in the adjacent territory.

3. **On June 23, a general open mobilization is announced.**

4. Approximately **one week later (July 1-3)**, mobilized and deployed in accordance with the operational plan approved at a meeting in Moscow on May 24, 1941, the North-Western, Western, South-Western and Southern fronts **go on a full-scale offensive.** Of course

direct documentary there is no confirmation of the reliability of this plan-schedule. And no one will ever find them. Already the first point - a large-scale provocation - required the strictest secrecy. Any information leakage

simply reduced the effect of the provocative staging to zero - it changed the sign of the effect to negative. From the unfortunate victim of a treacherous attack, Stalin turned (in the event of the disclosure of secrets) into a criminal and vile warmonger. This was not his intention. That is why written documents, most likely, never existed, direct executors, most likely, were subject to physical liquidation. If any written orders existed, they were most likely destroyed immediately after the plan lost all its meaning and significance, that is, on the afternoon of June 22, 1941. In the absence of direct documentary evidence, historians have to analyze tangled scraps of information referring to Stalin's three plans (to start the war in 1942, at the end of the summer of 1941, on July 1, 1941) and to the convulsive attempts to turn the tide on the evening of June 21, 1941. Nevertheless, the hypothesis outlined above allows us to basically unravel this whole tangle.

Why was there a second postponement of the rocking of the war? The answer to this question is quite clear. Hitler's secret plans were never on Stalin's desk, but the actual redeployment of German troops was tracked by Soviet intelligence, aviation and radio intelligence in sufficient detail. Based on this information, forecasts were made about the probable plans of the enemy. Until the beginning of June 1941, the Soviet leadership did not consider a German invasion possible in the coming weeks - and this was due not to Stalin's erroneous assessment of the available intelligence, but to the **real absence of a Wehrmacht strike force near the western borders of the USSR**. Thus, the "Special Message" of the Intelligence Department of the General Staff of the Red Army No. 660569 dated May 31, 1941 reported on the following distribution of the German armed forces: 122–126 divisions against England, 120–122 divisions against the USSR, 44–48 divisions in reserve. (6, p. 290) As is now known, it was erroneous to assume that the Wehrmacht had such a huge number of divisions and, accordingly, the extremely overestimated number of German troops in the West. An assessment of the grouping of German troops near the borders of the Soviet Union, even in such an overestimated size by almost one and a half times (in fact, at that moment it did not exceed 84 divisions)

did not yet give serious grounds for the assumption of the imminent start of the German offensive. (1, p. 304)

According to a deeply true figurative comparison proposed by V. Suvorov, both Hitler and Stalin "hunted" in Europe like a lion in the savannah: at first, a predator creeps up to its prey for a long time and silently, and only at the last moment deafening, paralyzing the victim snarls towards her. For Hitler, the moment of transition from the stage of unhurried "sneaking up" to the last decisive breakthrough **came on June 6-10**. These days, the loading into the railway echelons of tank and motorized divisions of the Wehrmacht, transferred to the East, began. The large-scale relocation of Luftwaffe air groups to airfields began a few days later. So, the two largest fighter squadrons (aviation divisions) of the 2nd Air Fleet (GS 53 and GS 51) flew to the airfields of occupied Poland on June 12-14 and 13-15, 1941, respectively. On June 10, the Wehrmacht high command brought to the attention of the army commanders the exact the day and hour (June 22, 3.30 am) of the invasion and the procedure for notifying the troops (*"in the event of a postponement of this period, the corresponding decision will be made no later than June 18 ... At 13.00 on June 21, the Dortmund signal will be transmitted to*

the troops. It means that the offensive, will begin on June 22 as planned, and that you can proceed to the open execution of orders"). (6, p. 341) And this time, Soviet intelligence (both military and NKGB

intelligence), although they did not receive any documentary information about the decision taken in Berlin, recorded the large-scale regrouping of German troops that had begun. Based on this, it was decided to bring the start of the offensive of the Red Army as close as possible. A fatal mistake was made only in determining the date for the start of the offensive, **at which the strike of the Soviet troops could still turn out to be preemptive**. Monday, June 23, 1941, was set as the day for the start of open mobilization. When was such a decision made? Analyzing the "Journal of Visits", we see that in June 1941 (before the war began), Zhukov and Timoshenko were in Stalin's office seven times: 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 18, 21 June. The first three dates can be removed from consideration immediately - grounds for

there was no revision of the plans then. On June 9, Timoshenko and Zhukov visited Stalin twice: during the day (for Stalin, with his habit of working at night, it was more like a "morning"), from 16.00 to 17.00, and in the evening. The evening meeting lasted a very long time - five and a half hours. In Stalin's office were also Deputy People's Commissar of Defense Marshal Kulik, Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, Malenkov, member of the Main Military Council, Chairman of the State Planning Committee of the USSR, Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars Voznesensky, Chairman of the Defense Committee under the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR Marshal Voroshilov, and head of the mobilization and planning department of the Defense Committee Safonov. What was discussed for five hours in a row by such a high meeting? I think that if we were talking about an urgent change in operational plans, then the composition of the participants in the meeting would be different. Most likely, really voluminous and complex issues of the mobilization deployment of the military industry were resolved. This assumption is confirmed by the fact that already during the meeting in Stalin's office, Shakhurin and the "tank people's commissar" Malyshev spent several hours for several hours.

On June 11, Timoshenko and Zhukov stayed in Stalin's office for only one hour, and even in a very strange company.

Together with them, the meeting was attended by: the People's Commissar of State Security of the USSR Merkulov, the head of the Main Directorate of Political Propaganda of the Red Army Zaporozhets, as well as the commander of the district troops and a member of the Military Council (commissar) of the Baltic OVO Kuznetsov and Dibrov. What was it? The short duration of the meeting and the rather "diverse" composition of the participants do not give grounds for the assumption that it was on June 11 that the fateful decisions were made. It can be assumed that on June 11, only the first of the four planned briefing meetings with the command of the western districts, which were already turning into fronts, took place. Another (and perhaps the most convincing) argument against the fact that something super important

was decided on June 11 is the fact that after June 11, the military did not visit Stalin for six whole days. Most likely, the decision to postpone the date of the invasion of Europe was made - moreover, after a long debate on **June 18, 1941**. On this day, Timoshenko and Zhukov spent four hours in Stalin's office, from 20.25 to 0.30. Almost simultaneously with them, Molotov entered the Boss's office.

(People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Stalin's first deputy for the Council of People's Commissars and, at that time, his closest associate) and Malenkov (Secretary of the Central Committee, member of the Main Military Council). This is the extremely narrow circle of people in which only a decision of this magnitude could be made. It is noteworthy that it is after June 18 that such significant events take place as the creation of front-line departments and their withdrawal to field command posts, orders are sent to the districts to mask airfields and bring the troops of the first echelon to combat readiness, and operational readiness mode No. 2 is declared in the fleet.

The decision to start an open general mobilization **from Monday 23 June** was quite logical. In the Soviet Union, the workplace was the center of life. Factory. It was there that the "draft contingents" were concentrated, and there, on the morning of June 23, 1941, "spontaneous rallies" of workers, outraged by the vile attack of fascist vultures on Soviet cities, were to take place. By this moment - like a "piano in the bushes" - millions of leaflets (advertisements) with the text of the Decree of the Presidium of the USSR Armed Forces on the announcement of mobilization should have been ready. Looking at a photocopy of one of these leaflets on p. 452 of the "Encyclopedia of the Great Patriotic War" (Moscow, 1985, half edited by M. M. Kozlov), published in a circulation of 500 thousand copies, K. Zakoretsky drew attention to the DATE of the adoption of the Decree. The photocopy is implemented in such a way that a magnifying glass does not help - the numbers finally "fall apart" into separate dots. However, the first digit does indeed look like a "1" much more than a "2". However, the mysteries of the mobilization leaflet do not end there. According to Zakoretsky, *"there is no mention of this leaflet in the special catalog "Leaflets of the Great Patriotic War" (published in Moscow in 1985). There is no data about this leaflet in another catalog: "Heroes and deeds. Soviet leaflets of the Great Patriotic War" (Moscow, 1958). There is a leaflet itself in the Ukrainian State Museum of the Great Patriotic War (Kyiv), but the paper of the leaflet is suspiciously very white, especially against the background of nearby documents on strongly yellowed paper..."*

Without delving further into the semi-detective story about the disappearance of a gigantic circulation of leaflets with the Decree on mobilization without a trace, we note that the very content of the Decree (i.e., the absence in

any mention of the outbreak of war, of Germany's treacherous attack on the USSR - which was already mentioned in the previous chapter) quite convincingly confirms Zakoretsky's version. Looking at the "one" under a microscope is not necessary. By the way, if the text of the Decree had been approved only at 16.00 on June 22, then it would hardly have been printed in millions of copies by the morning of June 23 - then chaos and confusion seized all the links of the state machine, including printing houses. Suffice it to recall the indisputable fact that the central government newspaper Izvestia published a report on the outbreak of war only on Tuesday, June 24!

June 22, 1941, the day before M-Day, was like no other suitable for the implementation of the planned provocation. I'm not kidding at all. June 22 is the longest day of the year (the longest daylight hours). In 1941, this day fell on Sunday - a day off. To obtain the maximum possible number of victims among the civilian population, the bombing on Sunday afternoon was the best option: a warm sunny day off, people slept off after a hard week of work and took to the streets, gardens and squares to take a walk with their children. 11-12 o'clock in the morning is just the time when in the summer in Russia (Belarus) courtyards and streets are filled with mothers with strollers. Then the time calculation is as follows:

- at 11 o'clock in the morning bombs fall on a peacefully resting city; - at 12 o'clock the people's commissar of defense sends a short message to the districts a four-word directive ("put the cover plan in place");
- at 13 o'clock a short directive of four words was received and deciphered at the headquarters of the districts;
- within an hour, the order was brought to all parts of the Air Force districts (fronts); -
- within the next hour, the order is received even in the most slovenly headquarters and units,
- one more hour to warm up the engines and hang the bombs. Total: at 16.00 aviation is ready to carry out its tasks according to cover plans (*"deliver a simultaneous strike on established airfields and enemy bases located in the first zone, to the line of Insterburg, Allenstein, Mlawa, Warsaw, Demblin ... strike airfields with a second sortie of bomber aviation And*

enemy bases located in the second zone to the line of Königsberg, Marienburg, Torun, Lodz ...") And when does the sun set on June 22? In the European part of the Soviet Union, over the airfields in the region of Bialystok and Lvov, it finally gets dark no earlier than 11 o'clock in the evening. In other words, Soviet aviation has at least 6-7 hours of daylight at its disposal. When the enemy comes to his senses and tries to deliver retaliatory airstrikes, the coming night will cover airfields, bases, military camps, railway stations more reliably than any camouflage nets. Well, isn't this a "gift option" for the start of the war? There were technical possibilities for staging: back in 1940, two Dornier-215 bombers, two Junkers-88 and five multi-purpose Me-110 bombers were purchased in Germany, not to mention that at an altitude of 5–6 km, no one, except for highly qualified specialists, would have recognized the silhouettes of aircraft ... Was it possible to do without a provocative staging?

Can. Stalin's order would have been carried out in any case. No one, neither Timoshenko in Moscow, nor the squadron commander at the border airfield, would dare to ask the question: "Why do we need to bomb Insterburg, Allenstein and Mlava?" On what, then, is the assumption of a provocation prepared and scheduled for June 22 based?

The assumption is based on the most important thing, on close attention to the personality and attitude of the main character in the world drama. Yes, I understand that persistent attempts to penetrate the secret of Stalin's thoughts and desires may seem to someone a deeply unscientific attempt to replace solid quoting of archival volumes with guesswork on coffee grounds. While fully understanding the logic of these objections, I nevertheless cannot agree with them. Precisely because I had to read several thousand pages of "special folders" of the minutes of the Stalinist Politburo meetings, precisely because I could be convinced on the basis of original documents that in the Stalinist empire even the issues of moving five gear-cutting machines were not resolved without the will and consent of the Boss from factory X to factory Y or replacing a jack as part of a transportable spare parts and accessories kit for a T-34 tank, which is why I believe that any study of foreign

The Soviet Union of the 1930s and 1940s, cut off from the analysis of Stalin's personality and motives, will inevitably be flawed.

Could the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks approve by its authority the list of names of milkmaids, shepherds and locksmiths who will be gathered in Moscow for an event called "Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR"? Of course he could. And yet, the farcical comedy of "direct, universal, secret" elections to Soviets at all levels was held in the Soviet Union for decades. From Stalin to Gorbachev. For what? FOR WHAT? For Western public opinion? Excuse me, who in countries with a developed democratic tradition could be deceived by such a primitive and rude staging of the "people's will", with one candidate on the ballot and the invariable "99.9 percent - for"? Nevertheless, these "elections" were carried out with comical seriousness. In strict accordance with the Great Stalinist Constitution. Our great-grandchildren, most likely, simply will not believe this, but we have seen it with our own eyes!

Could Stalin physically destroy his political opponents without trial and investigation, without resorting to the tragic farce of an "open trial"? Of course he could. Many (the vast majority of the victims of the Great Purge) were liquidated in exactly this way: without any trial, by the decision of the "troika", or even simply tortured to death during the "investigation". This is a fact. Nevertheless, the open "Moscow trials" of 36-37. were. This is also a fact. Practically inexplicable within the framework of normal human logic, but a real fact. For some reason, Stalin brought Lenin's closest associates to an open trial, during which they - in front of hundreds of journalists, including foreign ones - confessed that they had crushed glass and poured it into the oil of the workers. For what? On May 4, 1941, the Politburo of the Central Committee (signed

"Secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks I. Stalin") asked the members of the Central Committee whether these members agreed with the appointment of I. Stalin to the post of Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR. Voting was carried out by the method of written poll. And until 71 members of the Central Committee signed that they agreed, the decision to appoint J. Stalin as head of government was considered only a "draft decision." It is difficult to believe in this, but the relevant documents have been

Why were these empty efforts with a written poll vote needed (after all, all these pieces of paper were transported by field mail, with security, gasoline was burned at the same time)? Stalin wanted to "consult with his comrades"? Pardon me, in May 1941, Stalin could, without consulting anyone, appoint himself the Emperor of All Russia, the Son of God Ra and the new Buddha at the same time. Such a decision, the only correct and timely one, would be met with the universal approval of the working

people of the Land of Soviets. There is one answer to all these (and a thousand other similar) questions: he wanted so much. **Stalin loved clerical order.** He had such a whim. Everyone wonders in their own way. Akaky Akakievich admired the letters in the "relationships" that he copied. As those who read Gogol's "Overcoat" remember, Akaky Akakievich also had his favorite letters, which he met and wrote out in calligraphy with particular joy. The great Stalin was a terrible monster, an incredible hybrid of Genghis Khan and Akaky Akakievich. Stalin destroyed people on such a scale that Genghis Khan never dreamed of, but at the same time he enjoyed the accuracy and bureaucratic harmony of his decisions. That is why he exterminated his former friends and associates with equal pleasure, but at the same time he did not forget to ask permission from all the still living members of the Central Committee. And made out their "decision" in writing. And he put these pieces of paper in his "special folders." This term alone - "special folder" - adopted in the Stalinist empire to designate documents of the highest degree of secrecy, speaks volumes.

Comrade Stalin had his own ideas about what kind of bureaucratic forms the "invariably peaceful foreign policy" of the Soviet Union should be expressed in. With the inexorable persistence of the "terminator" he put these ideas into practice. Everything must be right. The Soviet Union cannot attack Finland. The Red Army can stop the provocations of the White Finnish military, which treacherously shelled Soviet territory - it is possible. And you can't attack yourself. The Soviet government can help the Finnish working people who have risen against the bloody Ryti-Tanner gang and have already created their own People's Government. It's possible. This People's Government can be helped to move to Helsinki. But the order to capture

Nobody ever gave Helsinki and the occupation of Finland away. Dear reader, you probably think that I am joking? Nothing like this. I am simply retelling the text of an open denunciation letter with which three retired colonels and one captain of the first rank addressed the governor of our Samara region. The signatories asked to stop the activities of the falsifier-slanderer (that is, me), who dared to publicly, in the Volzhskaya Kommuna newspaper, doubt that in November 1939 the White Finnish military men threatened the city of Lenin, the cradle of the Revolution. If in 2004 there were people who still believed in crudely, clumsily, slovenly crafted Stalinist fakes, then what could be expected from the "builders of socialism" of the 1941 model, intimidated half to death? That is why one should not be surprised that the alleged provocations were, as they say, "sewn with white thread." It was this "style and cut" that Comrade Stalin loved. Rough, absurd, slovenly "stitched" provocations. During the open "Moscow trials" of 1936, the accused confessed to secret meetings with long-dead people, which "meetings" allegedly took place in long-demolished hotels. The secretary of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, a member of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, "Mr. Kuusinen", who has been living in Moscow since 1918, was declared the head of the "people's government of democratic Finland". *"Jewelry accuracy of the hippopotamus, which Stalin was so distinguished for"* (A. I. Solzhenitsyn). And nothing. The working people at the entrance to the spontaneous rallies warmly approved and fully supported ...

The first part, the first stage of the Great Staging **took place in reality. This is not a hypothesis. It is a fact.** On June 13, 1941, the famous TASS Report was compiled (June 14 was published). Yes, yes, the same:

"... TASS declares that, according to the USSR, Germany is just as steadfastly observing the terms of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact as the Soviet Union, which is why, according to Soviet circles, rumors about Germany's intention to break the pact and launch an attack on the USSR are deprived of any soil ... The USSR, as follows from its peace policy, observed and intends to comply with the terms of the Soviet-German non-aggression pact, which is why rumors that

that the USSR is preparing for war with Germany are false and provocative..” All-

Union radio announcers read out this text to the accompaniment of the sound of wheels. Nine hundred railway echelons (not cars, namely echelons) with divisions of the Second Strategic Echelon, rumbling at the junctions, rushed to the West. The divisions of the frontier districts, secret night crossings, hiding for the day in the forests, crept to the border. All this is already known, declassified more than 15 years ago, but even today there are "historians" who continue to interpret the TASS report of June 13 as a manifestation of Stalin's "peacefulness" (or at best as a manifestation of "confusion in the face of an impending invasion"). Hippos - behemoth?

The first stage of the provocation was inevitably followed by the second: the staging of the bombing of Soviet cities by German aircraft. In response to the most peaceful statement of TASS - bombs on a sunny Sunday. Treacherous and vile murder of peaceful Soviet citizens. A snow-white dove of peace on one side, black crows on the other. And only after that - general mobilization. "Get up, huge country, get up for a mortal battle! Black birds will not fly over the Motherland! Rough? Too deliberate? Yes, but it was precisely this taste that the customer of the provocation had. Stalin liked to regale guests with spicy dishes... The thesis about the

provocative staging scheduled for June 22 not only corresponds to the general style of Stalin's "liberations" (the invasion of Finland was also preceded by "shelling the positions of Soviet troops in Mainil"), but also allows you to immediately explain several of the most "inexplicable" **facts before the war.**

First of all, the actions to demonstrate complacency and carelessness (starting from the "big theatrical evening" on June 21 and to the removal of anti-aircraft divisions from the location of troops and the announcement of a day off in parts of the Western OVO Air Force) that took place on June 20-21 become understandable. For a greater propaganda effect, the provocations of the bombs were supposed to fall on the Soviet city (cities?) in a peaceful, outwardly completely calm environment. In combat units - a day off. The command enjoys high theatrical art, the rank and file run Komsomol crosses and compete in volleyball skills. We are peaceful people, and our

the armored train is rusting on the siding. And in this sense, the age-old incantation of Soviet historiography ("Stalin was afraid to give Hitler a reason to attack") turns out to be almost true! It remains only to slightly clarify the phrase: "Stalin diligently built a situation in which his indignation and "noble rage" would look impeccably sincere."

In addition to the demonstrative, "ostentatious" side of the matter, the lowering of the combat readiness of the troops (primarily the Air Force and Air Defense) on the eve of the planned provocation had a **very specific functional meaning**. The provocative bombardment was to take place - and for this it was necessary to reduce (in the planned bombing area - to reduce to zero) the possibility of armed opposition. And here we have to remember the mysterious story that happened on the evening of June 21, 1941 in the 122nd Fighter Aviation Regiment (11th SAD, Western OVO).
"... On May 10, our regiment will be transferred from Lida to the Novy Dvor airfield, which is slightly west of Grodno. In the north, the border with the Germans was fifteen kilometers (according to the map - about 30 km from the border in 1941 - M.S.). In clear weather, from a height of two thousand meters, we saw a German airfield packed with different machines. And on the twenty-first of June, at six in the evening, after completing the flights, they received an order: to remove guns, machine guns, boxes of ammunition from the planes and store it all in a warehouse.

*"But this is... Even talking is scary... It looks like treason!" "Then everyone was perplexed, trying to find out what was the matter, but they explained to us: this is **an order from the commander of the district troops**, and orders are not*

discussed in the army ..." This rather short interview with Sergei Fedorovich Dolgushin was published on December 18, 2001 by the main army newspaper of the country "Krasnaya Star". S. F. Dolgushin met the beginning of the war as a young pilot in the 122nd PAP, received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union after the battle for Moscow, during the war years he made more than 500 sorties, personally shot down 17 German aircraft and 11 more - in the group. From the lieutenants he became a lieutenant general, for many years he was the head of the department of tactics at the VVIA them. N. E. Zhukovsky. V. Bardov, a historian from Grodno, kindly provided me with a record of his many hours of conversation with Sergei

the story of the events of June 21-22, even more surprising details appear.

*"... On the evening of Saturday, June 21, 1941, we were disarmed: they ordered us to remove guns, machine guns, ammunition and place them in captorkas. I consulted with my guys, and we removed the cannons and machine guns - we were forced to. And they left the cartridge boxes... Such a condition - it's the same as being naked... We asked: "Who issued such an idiotic order?" And the regiment commander Nikolaev explained to the squadron commanders (and those, in turn, to us): "This is an order from the commander of the Belarusian military district D. G. Pavlov." The day before, he came to our airfield **together with the commander of the Air Force of the district**, Major General I. I. Kopets ... Before that, we had **a commission from Moscow**, they flew in on Li-2. He stood at the airfield - the Germans first of all burned him, and they left by car, their entire commission was Moscow ... It was headed by a colonel, **head of the operational department of the Air Force ...** "*

Why would so many top aviation authorities gather in one, unremarkable combat aviation regiment? For reference: the grouping of the Soviet Air Force in the western theater immediately before the war consisted of about 111-130 combat-ready air regiments, including 52 fighter regiments (and this is not counting many dozens of new air regiments being formed in the western districts). Why exactly did the 122nd IAP attract such attention? And, most importantly, for what purpose were weapons removed from fighter aircraft? Another technical reference necessary to understand the absurdity of the situation is that the I-16 (like any other fighter of that time) did not have hanging weapons - the guns were tightly fixed inside the wing, machine guns were just as tightly screwed under the hood engine. The dismantling of weapons is in no way included in the regular, scheduled maintenance work. Among other things, after re-installing the gun, it was still necessary to "shoot" (in a certain way to combine the axis of the barrel with the axis of symmetry of the aircraft and the sight), and this is a complex and time-consuming operation that requires special equipment. Inspection, lubrication, maintenance of the gun itself are carried out on the plane - for this, special hatches are provided in the wing design. 122nd IAP

(a fighter regiment located 30 km from the border, beyond which *"the main part of the German army in the strip against the Western OVO took its original position"*) on the evening of June 21, 1941, it was disarmed, and not "sent for repair and rearmament."

The mysterious, if not "sabotage" actions of the commander of the district (front), the commander of the district air force and the "Moscow commission" headed by the head of the operational directorate of the Red Army Air Force become completely logical, if we only assume that it was the city of Grodno and its inhabitants that were to become a victim of bloody Stalin's games. Yes, of course, it was possible to limit ourselves to a strict, very strict order: "On June 22, not a single aircraft in the 122nd IAP should take off!" But not all orders are executed, and the "issue price" in this case was exceptionally high. It's good if the bombers are shot down on the way to Grodno, before the bombing, but what if after? And what if a downed bomber with fake identification marks (and even with a Soviet crew on board!) Crashes in the adjacent territory and is presented to journalists from all over the world? Stalin did not like to take risks, therefore, in this case, he ordered to solve the problem "with the jewelry accuracy of a hippopotamus": disarm the fighter aviation regiment closest to Grodno, and that's it. The choice of the city

of Grodno as an object for a provocative bombardment also looks quite logical. It is logical from the point of view of the effectiveness of subsequent actions (the beginning of the cover operation and the strike of the Soviet Air Force on "established enemy airfields and bases"). The Suwalki ledge these days was literally stuffed with German aviation, tank, and infantry units. On a narrow strip (approximately 35x35 km), four tank (20, 7, 12, 19), 3 motorized (14, 20, 18), nine infantry (26, 6, 35, 5, 161, 28, 8, 256, 162) divisions of the Wehrmacht. Four groups (regiments) of diving Junkers (more than half of the total number of Ju-87s on the entire Eastern Front), five fighter air groups and two assault (ZG) groups equipped with twin-engine Me- 110. There was no such concentration of forces anywhere else. Accordingly, there was no better object for the devastating first strike of Soviet aviation.

It is possible that the death of the commander of the Air Force of the Western District (front) is also connected with the planned provocative staging of the bombardment of the city of Grodno. According to the generally accepted (more precisely, introduced in the era of Khrushchev's criticism of Stalin's "myopic gullibility") version, Major General I. I. Kopets shot himself in his office on June 22, 1941. This hypothesis (which turned into an axiom only as a result of numerous repetitions - no documents on this subject have yet been published) does not fit most, in the case of suicide, the main personality traits of the deceased. Hero of the Soviet Union, holder of the Order of Lenin and the Order of the Red Banner, a participant in two wars (Spanish and Finnish), 34-year-old General Ivan Kopets was not a "former fighter pilot." Until the last day he remained a flying pilot. Marshal Skripko, in his memoirs, notes with some disapproval that the district aviation commander spent most of his time at airfields where Kopets did not arrive on the ZIS, but flew on the I-16 fighter. Yes, and the title of Hero of the Soviet Union squadron commander I. I. Kopets received not as a gift "for the anniversary", but for personal courage shown in the sky of Madrid, where he personally shot down 6 Franco aircraft. For

a person with such a biography and such a character, it would be much more natural to commit suicide - if such an intention actually arose - in the air, in the cockpit of a combat aircraft, taking with him several enemies. The fighter plane was at the personal disposal of the Air Force commander. There were more than enough German planes in the sky over Belarus on June 22. The psychological shock from the unsuccessful start of hostilities could not cause suicide simply because at noon on the first day of the war there was neither the very fact of the defeat of the district air force, nor information from the units at the district headquarters (the myth about the aircraft destroyed "at peacefully sleeping airfields" and appeared at all twenty years later). Most likely, on June 22, 1941, they arrived for the front aviation commander. People with warm hearts arrived, "friends of the people." This visit could have at least two reasons. The first is a general wave of arrests, which from the end of May 1941 rolled over the highest command staff of the Soviet Air Force (on June 24, the former commander-in-chief of the Air Force Rychagov was arrested, on June 26, 1941, the

Ionov, on June 27 Volodin, Chief of Staff of the Red Army Air Force, Proskurov, Assistant Commander-in-Chief of the Air Force for Long-Range Aviation, and Ptukhin, Commander of the Air Force of the Kyiv Regional Military District, were arrested. But there could be another reason related to the failed provocation in the sky over Grodno: a team of "liquidators" came to the district air force commander, who, working strictly within the approved plan and despite the outbreak of war, destroyed the direct participants and organizers of the staging. There is no need to categorically affirm anything, but there are too many strange coincidences in this case ...

At a time when the last preparations for the grandiose events that were to take place on June 22-23 were being completed in Moscow and Minsk, on the other side of the border, the final preparations were over. This is no longer a hypothesis, this is a tragic fact. At one o'clock in the afternoon, on Saturday, June 21, the Wehrmacht headquarters received the prearranged signal "Dortmund", and the German troops began "open execution of orders." The secret, brought (directly or even indirectly) to three million soldiers and officers, after a few hours, ceased to be a secret for the command of the Red Army. At least two defectors are known who crossed the Western Bug in the zone of the Kyiv OVO and reported the imminent start of the war. It is also hard to believe that Soviet intelligence did not have other sources of information in the enemy troops. Be that as it may, on the evening of June 21, after passing through half a dozen instances, this information reached Moscow. In the textbook version of G.K. Zhukov, events developed as follows:

"On the evening of June 21, the chief of staff of the Kiev military district, Lieutenant General M.A. Purkaev, called me and reported that a defector, a German sergeant major, had come to the border guards, claiming that German troops were leaving for the initial areas for an offensive that would begin on the morning of June 22. I immediately reported to the People's Commissar and I. V. Stalin what M. A. Purkaev had conveyed.

"Come with the people's commissar in 45 minutes to the Kremlin," he said. I. V. Stalin.

Having taken with us a draft directive to the troops, together with the People's Commissar and Lieutenant General N. F. Vatutin, we went to the Kremlin. On the way, we agreed at all costs to achieve a decision to put the troops on combat readiness.

JV Stalin met us alone. He was clearly concerned. "But didn't the German generals plant this defector in order to provoke a conflict?" - he asked. - No, - answered S. K.

Timoshenko. We believe the defector is telling the truth. Meanwhile, members of the Politburo

entered the office of I. V. Stalin. Stalin briefly briefed them. - What do we do? - asked I. V. Stalin. no

answer followed.

"We must immediately give a directive to the troops on bringing all the troops of the border districts to full combat readiness," said the people's

commissar. — Read! - said I. V.

Stalin. I have read the draft directive. JV Stalin

remarked: "It is premature to give such a directive now, perhaps the issue will still be settled peacefully. It is necessary to give a short directive in which it is indicated that the attack can begin with provocative actions of the German units. The troops of the border districts should not succumb to any provocations, so as not to cause complications. Wasting no time, N.

F. Vatutin and I went into another room and quickly drew up a draft directive of the people's commissar. Returning to the office, they asked permission to report. I. V. Stalin, having listened to the draft directive and read it again himself, made some amendments and handed it over to the people's commissar for signature. (15, p. 261)

The only document by which we can verify the authenticity of this version is, again, the "Journal of Visits". The recording of the meeting does not exist (or it has not been declassified to this day). As for memoirs, neither Stalin, nor Timoshenko, nor Vatutin left them. Judging by the "Journal of Visits", Timoshenko and Zhukov entered Stalin's office at 20.50. Together with them, at 20.50, Marshal Budyonny also entered Stalin (about whose presence Zhukov did not utter a single word). Vatutin did not enter the office (however, it is possible that at least Zhukov did not lie about this, and Vatutin, who arrived with him, simply remained in the waiting room). Stalin was not alone. There were four people in the office with him: Molotov, Beria, Malenkov and the Soviet naval attache in Germany, a modest

captain of the first rank Vorontsov. No other "members of the Politburo" entered the cabinet. At 9:55 pm, another person entered Stalin's office. He was not a member of the Politburo and at that time held the position of People's Commissar for State Control. When discussing secret military issues of particular importance, the People's Commissar of State Control had absolutely nothing to do. His job is to check the factory canteens, compliance with the rules of Soviet trade in the general store, the moisture content of potatoes in the ORS warehouse. But the name of this man was Mekhlis, and since 1924 he was next to Stalin, performing the unspoken role of a particularly trusted guarantor for secret and dirty affairs. At 22.20 the military left the office. (6, p. 301)

This ends the facts available to us, and we return to hypothesis No. 3, which, in turn, is based on the key points of hypothesis No. 1, namely:

Timoshenko and Zhukov rated the combat effectiveness of the Red Army very low, and Stalin very

high.

Based on their assessment of the combat effectiveness of the Red Army, Timoshenko and Zhukov had no doubt that the 115 German divisions deployed near the Soviet borders would be quite enough to smash the "invincible and legendary" to smithereens. That is why they believed the obscure German sergeant major. Completely and immediately. In addition, at that very moment they thought with horror that a day off was declared in the air regiments of the Western OVO, one of the 12 fighter regiments was completely disarmed, and anti-aircraft divisions were withdrawn to the district training ground. The firing cellar smelled quite distinctly. Both of them perfectly understood that Stalin would declare himself the "inspirer and organizer" of the victory, and he would look for the perpetrators of the defeat among those around him, and they were the first in this line. So at 8:50 pm they entered the Boss's office with a desperate determination *to "get a decision at all costs."* What decision? "On bringing troops to combat readiness"? Six pages earlier, Zhukov, without a shadow of embarrassment, writes that he did not have to persuade Stalin on this issue for a long time: *"The General Staff only became aware of the day of the attack of the German troops from a defector on June 21, which we immediately reported to I. V. Stalin. He immediately agreed"* (emphasized by me. - M.S.) *to bring the troops to combat readiness.* (15, p. 255) About what

then for an hour and a half there was a tense discussion? What was the directive about, which Stalin immediately rejected, ordered a new one to be drawn up, then corrected something else in it? Of course (the word for the hypothesis is not very suitable, but in this case it is quite justified), of course, the dispute was about the introduction of a cover plan and the immediate announcement of general mobilization, and not at all about a scanty stub of these actions under the literary name "bringing troops on alert" . Stalin did not

believe the German defector at all. Firstly, because, being himself an infinitely deceitful person, he did not trust anyone. The first and main thought that arose in him after Tymoshenko's message was: "Who sent this sergeant major? For what? Didn't Tymoshenko himself make all this up? Or Purkaev? Interrogate the scoundrel with prejudice and shoot..." Alas, and this, unfortunately, is not scurrilousness, but a quote (though about another defector on another day). It is also noteworthy that nothing is known to this day about the fate of the two defectors who, on the evening of June 21, risking their own lives and endangering their families, tried to help the "homeland of the world proletariat". Secondly, because such a coincidence of dates (the date of the provocation conceived by Stalin and the date of the real Hitler's invasion) was too incredible. Like in the movies, but that doesn't even happen in the movies. It's the same as hitting an opponent's bullet during a duel. This cannot be, because it can never be. Thirdly... But this "thirdly" can only be understood by those who were lucky enough to do some creative work in their lives. Well, for example, you are playing Oginsky's polonaise on the violin - and then the neighbor begins to bore the wall with a percussion electric drill ... Do you understand? This is how Stalin reacted to Timoshenko's proposal to take and destroy the beautiful plan (a provocation on the verge of mobilization) of Comrade Stalin. I am afraid that Stalin sent Timoshenko and Zhukov to the same place where he ordered Merkulov to send "*a source from the German headquarters. aviation*"...

Stalin did not trust people, but at the same time he implicitly trusted logic. His logic, which he was very proud of. And

on the evening of June 21, 1941, he reasoned (and finally reasoned) absolutely logically. "The Germans did not complete the concentration of troops. Half of the Wehrmacht divisions are still in the West. To attack like this

forces against the Red Army - madness. The number of German aviation at our borders is negligible. Against France, on a front of 300 km, in May 1940 there were one and a half times more aircraft! With such frail forces, with such air cover, the Germans cannot attack. And they won't. We still have 7 - 10 days left. And we need only one single day, June 22. Just one day. Leaflets about the announcement of mobilization from June 23 are already being printed ...

"For the most understanding, I'm ready to repeat it again. The traditional version: "Stalin believed Ribbentrop's signature on the Non-Aggression Pact and therefore did not believe that Hitler would

attack the Soviet Union." My version: "Stalin believed in the power of the Red Army and therefore did not believe the report that Hitler decided to launch an invasion on June 22, before the completion of the concentration of German army forces near the borders of the USSR, which (according to Stalin) needed to be concentrated for the war with the mighty Red Army. Hitler's intention to launch an invasion on the 24th, 25th, 26th, and on any

subsequent day, Stalin no longer bothered. Timoshenko understood that Stalin's reaction would be just that. Therefore, he called with him his old comrade from the First Cavalry, in which Budyonny was the commander, and Timoshenko was the commander of the cavalry division. Marshal Budyonny was formally listed as Timoshenko's deputy, but he, as one of the few surviving "heroes of the Civil War", was, as they say, "acceptable to the Master" and in a complex system of court intrigues "weighed" more than the people's commissar of defense. Zhukov, on the other hand, was a new person, in the eyes of Stalin's entourage - of little authority (he was not even a member of the Central Committee, not to mention membership in the Politburo), so he could not help persuade Stalin and Molotov. Zhukov, over the years, perfectly understood all these games, therefore, in his petty ambition, he removed Budyonny.

Not from life, but at least from the key moment of his memoirs. Stalin's difficult conversation with the military ended with the fact that Stalin did not give permission to put the cover plan into effect, but allowed the confusing and indistinct Directive No. 1 to be sent to the districts. Let me remind you once again that the phrase "put all units on alert" in Dire

the requirements "not to succumb to provocations". The fleet did not participate in all these tricky games with provocations and staging, so N. G. Kuznetsov simply and unpretentiously transferred it from readiness No. 2 to readiness No. 1. Nobody forbade him to do

this. Having finished with the discussions, Stalin finished his work unusually early and left for a nearby dacha. Sleep. He did not believe in the possibility of a German attack, and the day of June 22 was very tense (in the morning - the bombing of Grodno, in the afternoon - an order to start a cover operation, in the evening - the first raid on German airfields, in the late evening - "debriefing" and final preparations for the announcement of mobilization). Before such a day it was necessary to get enough sleep.

Part 3

DESTROY

Chapter 13

VOICES OF THE 41st

"... On the night of June 22, the tanks crossed the border and moved along the roads of Lithuania in the direction of Dvinsk ... I sit, sticking my head out the hatch, and I see - along our colossal length of the column, passing straight along the road without a single shot to the East, they are moving towards weapons of the Red Army. Pass. I could not resist and shout: "Great, guys!" The first reaction to my words is the question: "Where to surrender? - It was a column of Soviet prisoners of war. They walked on their own, without German guards. And with weapons ... "

Memories

G. N. Chavchavadze, commander

reconnaissance group of the 56th tank

Wehrmacht Corps

"To the Commander of the 10th

Army Why did the mechanized corps not advance, who is to blame, immediately step up actions and do not panic, but control. It is necessary to beat the enemy in an organized manner, and not run without control. You must know each division where it is, when, what it does and what results it has. Why didn't you give the task of attacking the mechanized corps? Find where the 49th and 113th Rifle Divisions are and withdraw. Fix your mistakes. Carry ammunition and fuel. It is better to take food on the spot. Remember, if you do not act actively, the War Council will not tolerate any more.

Pavlov, Fominykh"

combat order

commander of the troops

Western Front w / n

dated June 23, 1941

"... On the morning of June 23, German aircraft fired at us. Our tanks were the latest, every single T-34 and KV. We hid in the woods. At that time, Captain Rassadnev was still in command of our battalion, but since noon on June 23 I have not seen him, because several times that day we scattered in all directions ... We retreated through forests, swamps, along impassable roads, since the Germans had all the good roads. We left Volkovysk, Slonim, Baranovichi... It seems to me that the officers themselves created the panic. In front of the soldiers, they tore off the officer's stripes. It was forbidden even to shoot at the planes. But there were so many troops, planes flew overhead ... So they almost reached Smolensk, and there they also left so much equipment! Everyone fled, and the equipment and weapons (tanks, guns) were abandoned. I cannot tell where the fighting took place, as there were almost none. In our direction, we only broke through the German landing for one night, it was near Slonim or Stolbtsy ..."

Memories

S. A. Afanaseva, 4th Panzer

division (6th mechanized corps,

Western Front)

days "The experience wars shows of the first disorganization and carelessness of many commanders, including big bosses. They begin to think about providing fuel, shells, and cartridges only at a time when cartridges are already running out, while a huge mass of vehicles

busy with the evacuation of the families of the commanding staff, who are also accompanied by the Red Army, that is, people of the combat crew. The wounded are not evacuated from the battlefield, soldiers and commanders are not allowed to rest, while cattle are withdrawn, food

is left to the

enemy. I order: 1. Each chief is obliged to provide fire supplies for the upcoming battle. To force the suppliers to organize hourly combat support for the battle. Responsibility is assigned to the senior chief 2. Stop the evacuation of families by car. 3. Everyone must fulfill the duties of their occupied

positions.

4. Organize the evacuation of the wounded from the battlefield. No one a wounded commander and a soldier should not remain with the enemy ... "

War Council directive

Western Front w / n

dated June 23, 1941

"Parts of the 4th Army retreated after a bandit raid by the enemy, offering resistance at the defense lines and by 18.00 on 24.6.41 the remnants of the corps withdrew to the area of Voitka, Mazurka and Sinyavka, where they were fixed to provide further resistance. The remnants of the units of the 6th and 42nd rifle divisions of the 28th rifle corps, after a series of defensive battles, retreated to the Rusinovichi, Talminovichi area by 18 o'clock, where they are put in order. These remnants have no combat readiness... From the constant and cruel bombardment, the infantry is demoralized and does not show stubbornness in defense. Units retreating randomly, and sometimes even units, have to be stopped and turned to the front by the commanders of all formations, although these measures, despite the use of weapons, did not give the desired effect.

Operational summary No. 01

headquarters of the 4th Army (Western

front) of June 24, 1941

“... The commander from the 5th Panzer Division of the North-Western Front reported to the commander of the 13th Army that Vilnius was occupied by the Germans at 17.00 on 23.6.41, who were continuing the offensive. The 5th Panzer Division suffered heavy losses. Part of the rear of the tank division - in Molodechno. According to the commander of the 9th division of the NKVD troops, Vilnius was not busy at 19:30, the battle was going on 20 km west of Vilnius. The entire road from Vilnius to Molodechno is clogged with retreating infantry, artillery and tanks...”

Operational summary No. 04

headquarters of the Western Front by 10.00

June 24, 1941

“Enemy aviation by the end of 23.6.41, together with tank units, attacked our units at the turn of the river. Yaselda. Scattered units of the 28th Rifle and 14th Mechanized Corps, which did not have time to put themselves in order, could not withstand this attack, supported by a large number of aircraft, and began to withdraw, which, despite a number of defensive points, turned into a disorganized continuous retreat of mixed units behind R. Yaselda. On the morning of June 24, 1941, the 55th Rifle Division came under the command of the army, which replaced the 205th Motorized Division by

13:00 on June 24, 1941 and organized defense along the river. Shara ... However, at 14.00 on 24.6.41, the enemy, after artillery and aviation preparation, went on the offensive against the 55th Infantry Division, having ahead

echelon of tanks (20-30 pieces). Parts of the division could not stand it and, despite the introduction of the second echelons of the regiments into battle and the entire presence of tanks of the 14th mechanized corps (up to 25 vehicles), they began to retreat and by 18 o'clock they moved beyond the river. Shara. The remnants of the non-combat-ready units of the 28th Rifle Corps, the 42nd and 6th Rifle Divisions, and the 14th Mechanized Corps are assembled in the areas as indicated in Operational Report No. 01. About the exact position of the units of the 75th and 49th Rifle Divisions of the data No".

Combat Report No. 07

headquarters of the 4th Army by 19.50

June 24, 1941

"... People were walking, driving, running everywhere, fleeing from the Germans. Instead of an army, there was a crowd. Somewhere not far from Baranovichi and near Slonim, the roads from Brest and Bialystok converged like a wedge in a large forest. There were several hundred cars, if not thousands. Here for the first time I saw an attempt by some colonel to stop a senseless flight. He stood in the back of the car, shouting that it was a shame that we should organize defense. Only a few approached the car where the colonel was standing and listened to him. The bulk of the people began to move away and look for where to go. Most of the military were already unarmed... By the evening of June 24, soldiers had already met, dressed in civilian uniforms and without weapons..."

Memoirs of F. Ya. Cheron

"... In the afternoon, a general was delivered to the command post of the corps without weapons, in a torn tunic, exhausted and exhausted, who said that, following the instructions of the front headquarters, he saw to the west of Rovno headlong rushing to the east one after another cars with our fighters. The general caught the panic and decided to detain one of

machines. In the end, he succeeded. There were up to 20 people in the car. Instead of answering questions about where they were running and what unit they were, the general was dragged into the back and began to be interrogated in unison. Then he was declared a saboteur in disguise, his documents and weapons were taken away, and he was immediately sentenced to death. Having contrived, the general jumped out on the move and rolled off the road into thick rye ... Cases of shelling of persons trying to detain the alarmists also took place in other areas. Those fleeing from the front acted in this way, apparently out of fear that they would not be returned back ... On June 24, in the Klevan region (150 km from the border. -

M.S.), we gathered a lot of would-be warriors, among whom there were quite a few officers. Most of these people did not have weapons. To our shame, all of them, including the officers, were arguing the insignia. In one of these groups, my attention was attracted by an elderly man sitting under a pine tree, in his appearance and manner of bearing in no way resembling a soldier. A young nurse sat next to him. Turning to those sitting, and there were at least a hundred of them, I ordered the officers to come up to me. Nobody moved. Raising my voice, I repeated the order a second, third time. Again, the answer was silence and stillness. Then, going up to the elderly "encirclement", he ordered him to get up. Then he asked what rank he was. The word "colonel" he squeezed out of himself with such indifference and at the same time with such impudent defiance that his appearance and tone literally blew me away. Pulling out a pistol, I was ready to shoot him right there, on the spot. Apathy and bravado instantly subsided from the colonel. Realizing how it could end, he fell to his knees and began to ask for mercy ... "

K. K. Rokossovsky,

"Soldier's Duty"

"... On the fourth or fifth day of the war, in the morning, our column reached the city of Volkovysk. Near the place of our parking was a military hospital, in which there were many

the wounded. Probably, the staff, hastily leaving everything, fled, and therefore a column of wounded moved from the hospital to the road, many of whom were on crutches, moving with difficulty. A crowd of bandaged and bloody people stopped on the side of the road, many of them began to beg: "Brothers, don't leave us, take us with you." No one responded to pleas for help. Then a group of the wounded went to the carriageway, blocking it with their bodies. Several cars with civilians in them crashed into the crowd with a running start. There was a crackle of crutches, a crunch of human bones, a bloody mess of screaming and groaning people formed, but no one paid attention to them - the cars hurried to

East..."

Memories

I. S. Astashkina

"... On the evening of June 26, the Military Council of the 5th Army heard a report from the head of the organizational department, Colonel Shcherbakov, and the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army for Logistics, Colonel Fedorchenko, on the progress of mobilization of the troops and rear services of the 5th Army. It was found that the mobilization of the troops and rear of the army, which, according to the mob plan, should have been completed at 24:00 on June 25, that is, on the third day of mobilization (announced from 00:00 on June 23), was

actually disrupted. The psychological impact of the enemy's surprise attack on the mood of the local population, the rapid movement of the front line to the east, and the subversive activities of enemy agents on our territory led to the fact that the bulk of the rank and file of the reserve - natives of the western regions of Ukraine - either did not have time to appear in units, or evaded turnouts for mobilization ... A few vehicles from local enterprises did not enter the troops, as they were used to evacuate the families of Soviet employees and workers to the east. Command

and the technical staff of the reserve, the mechanized transport and the driver's staff, assigned from the eastern regions, also did not arrive in the army ... "

A. V. Vladimirovsky

(then chief

operational department

headquarters of the 5th Army)

"On the Kiev direction"

"... On the morning of June 26, the 8th TD approached Dvinsk (Daugavpils). At 8 o'clock in the morning, being at her headquarters, I received a report that both large bridges across the Dvina were in our hands. The battle was for the city, located on the other side. A large bridge, absolutely not damaged, fell into our hands ... Before the start of the offensive, they asked me whether we were thinking and how long to reach Dvinsk. I replied that if we failed to do this in 4 days, then it was unlikely that we would be able to capture the bridges intact. Now we have done it in 4 days and 5 hours, counting from the moment the offensive began; we overcame the resistance of the enemy, having covered 300 km in a continuous raid. Success, hardly possible, if all commanders and soldiers were not covered by one goal - Dvinsk, and if we were not willing to take great risks in order to achieve this goal. We now felt a sense of great satisfaction as we drove across the huge bridges into the city, most of which, unfortunately, the enemy had set on fire. Moreover, our success was not achieved at the cost of great sacrifices .. "

Manstein,

"Lost Victories"

"The position of the front. The 8th Army, which suffered 40% or more losses, retreats to the northern coast of the West. Dvina. The 2nd Panzer Division apparently perished. Position 5th I don't know the tank division and the 84th motorized division. The 11th Army as a unit does not exist. I do not know the positions of the 5th, 33rd, 188th, 128th, 23rd and 126th rifle divisions. 41st Rifle Corps - I don't know the status. I have no connections for firm control. The military council of the front is fully aware of the significance of the Zap. Dvina..."

Commander's report

troops of the Northwestern

front b / n dated June 28, 1941

"... Cars, tractors, carts, crowded with people, were moving past in a continuous stream. We tried to stop the military, who were traveling and walking along with the refugees. But no one wanted to listen. Sometimes shots were fired in response to our demands. Everyone already claimed that Slonim was occupied, that German landing forces had landed ahead; barriers of tanks that have broken through, that it makes no sense to defend here. On June 28, as soon as the sun rose, enemy aircraft began a general processing of the coast of Russia and the Volkovysk region. In essence, on this day, both military formations of the formation and unit of the 10th Army finally ceased to exist. Everything was mixed up and rolled to the east like a shaft ... When our small group reached the old border in the afternoon of June 30, the same chaos reigned here, just like on the shores of Russia. All the corpses were packed with cars, wagons, hospitals, refugees, scattered units and groups of our troops ... "

Memoirs of Grechaninenko

(then Chief of Staff)

94th cavalry regiment of the 6th cavalry division.

Western Front)

“You criminally left the troops to the mercy of fate and hide your skin. For such a responsible operation as the withdrawal of an entire army, it was necessary to draw up a plan, withdraw troops from line to line and firmly control the withdrawal of each formation. I demand that this be done immediately. The task force of the headquarters will return to Mitava and lead the withdrawal. Send the left-flank 11th Infantry Division immediately to Jekabpils ... Submit a plan of action through Lieutenant General Safronov. Maintain radio contact with front headquarters. You avoid communication, apparently with intent, because you know nothing and do not want to know about your troops.

On 28 and 29/6/41, continue the withdrawal, finish on 30/6/41, withdraw all military formations. Cheer up the troops. Save their fighting capacity and wait in Riga...”

Commander's directive

troops of the Northwestern

front b / n dated June 28, 1941

“I report the situation that determines the possibilities fulfillment of your combat order No. 05 dated 27.6.41

Directly opposite the river. Berezina there are no large parts of the enemy. Separate tank detachments operate along the main highways with protection from them in the form of separate patrols (usually tankettes) by force from squad to platoon. The reconnaissance carried out by me by separate patrols from two armored vehicles on Borisov, Smolevichi and Borisov, Zagorye, closer than 30–40 km did not meet enemy patrols.

The garrison, which I have for the defense of the line of the river. Berezina and the city of Borisov, has a well-knit combat unit only as part of an armored school (up to 1,400 people). The rest of the composition (fighters and commanders) is a collection of "rabble" from rear alarmists, demoralized by the situation noted above, commanders from the rear following in search of their units (business trips, vacations, treatment) with a significant percentage of German intelligence and counterintelligence agents (spies, saboteurs) who have stuck to them etc.). All this makes the garrison incompetent. There are a number of escapes of fighters and commanders, provocative night panics in the form of night shelling of the units standing in front of the second echelons, as happened on the night of 25 to 26 and from 26 to 27.6.41 with victims - killed and wounded. On June 27, 1941, there was a fact of flight with a nominal list of one of the units of the commanding staff ... 4) The absence of the 3rd branch and the tribunal, before I personally organized them, significantly weakens the combat capability of the already poorly combat-ready units of the garrison. In addition, there are no tanks and anti-tank guns."

Chief's report

mountain garrison. Borisov No. 03

dated June 28, 1941

"The Bureau of the Gomel Regional Committee informs you about some facts that have taken place since the beginning of hostilities and are continuing at the present time.

1. The demoralizing behavior of a very significant number of commanders: the departure of commanders from the front under the pretext of escorting evacuated families, group flight from units has a corrupting effect on the population and sows panic in the rear. On June 27, a group of collective farmers from the Kornalinsky village council detained and disarmed a group of about 200 military men who left the airfield and

heading to Gomel. Several small groups and individuals disarmed the collective farmers of the Uvarovich district ... "

Report of the Gomel Regional Committee

in the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks of June 29, 1941

"... Now, from Drohichyn to Luninets and further east to Zhitkovichi (respectively, 100-200 - 260 km east of the border Brest), individual units are resisting the enemy, and not some kind of organized army ... The location of the commander of the 4th Army is still it is still unknown, no one is in charge of the alignment of forces, the Germans can freely come to Luninets, which can create a bag for the entire Pinsk direction ... The mobilization carried out in our area did not give any effect. People wander without a purpose, there are no weapons and outfits to send people. The city is full of commanders and Red Army soldiers from Brest and Kobrin, who do not know what to do, and constantly moving east in cars without any command ... In Pinsk, in a panic, they themselves blew up artillery warehouses and oil depots and announced that the Germans had blown them up with bombs, and the head of the garrison and the regional committee of the party (Brest) fled to us in Luninets ... These facts undermine the confidence of the population. We are being shown some inexplicable laxity."

Secretary's telephone message

district committee (Luninets,

Belarus) in the Central Committee of the CPSU (b)

dated June 29, 1941

"As a result of a daytime battle with enemy tank units, the consolidated detachment of General Povetkin retreated to the line of the river. Ola, having suffered huge losses during the period of aviation, mortar and artillery preparation. 21st road

the operational regiment in the amount of 100 people, having suffered losses, fled to the villages. The

detachment lost out of 6-6 tanks, out of 18-11 guns, out of 6 regimental artillery guns - 2 guns and out of 6 tankettes - 2. The cadet battalions held firm, suffered heavy losses, communication with them was lost. Combined battalions sent to the front in vehicles with the beginning of mortar and aviation training cannot be retained. Personal Military retreat suspended on the river.

Ola. Bridges to it are burned. There is no confidence in the stamina of the interference detachment, only one advice, only one artillery fights, and only it holds back the offensive

tanks..."

combat report

Commander of the 4th

Army b / n dated June 30, 1941

"We consider it urgently necessary to bring to the attention of the Politburo of the Central Committee that the success of the Germans in many ways, if not in everything, was facilitated by the panic prevailing in the command top of individual military units, and the panicky inactivity in local bodies ... Since June 22, we have not received

any instructions about our activities. Neither the secretary of the Smolensk regional committee, nor the chairman of the regional executive committee gave a single instruction or advice, and do not even answer telephone inquiries. Almost the only directive that we received on June 27 is dated the 23rd of this month, where the regional executive committee requires information about the state of churches and prayer buildings ... Even a narrow circle of senior officials does not have at least approximate information about the

situation on nearby fronts, plus you see that they are fleeing from Smolensk, while the regional authorities are silent, and it becomes difficult to navigate and distinguish the truth from

provocations ... If further every leading Soviet party worker begins to evacuate his family, then there will be no one to defend the Motherland.

Letter from members of the Defense Staff

Yelnya in the Central Committee of the CPSU (b)

dated June 30, 1941

"...Impression neglect is is predominant in this country. It is further reinforced by the fact that an unusually large number of houses have been burned down... The attitude of the population ranges from surprising indifference to usually timid curiosity and gullibility. Due to too much destruction, there are many refugees moving with all their belongings, but no robberies of houses have been noticed. On the territory that formerly belonged to Poland (i.e., in the so-called "Western Belarus" - M.S.), German soldiers were enthusiastically greeted as liberators. But even on the former Russian territory, it happens that they throw flowers and greet them in a friendly way. The confidence of the population is manifested primarily in the fact that buried food and other property is dug up again when we arrive, since the German soldier, of course, will not take it away.

Often, out of fear, the population betrays the stragglers of Russian soldiers, since they can, of course, live only by robbing the population.

There were no acts of sabotage by the population in the corps zone. On the contrary, in cases where the frightened population dares to say anything at all, much dissatisfaction with the collective-farm system and all Bolshevik management is expressed. In general, the command of the corps regards the danger of a guerrilla war with the participation of the population as small. People in the areas we passed through in their way of life and

statements do not give the impression of those who can fanatically adhere to any idea at all.

Report of the commander of the 9th

Army Corps of the Wehrmacht

(Army Group Center)

General Guyer,

late June 1941

"... Parts of the corps are combat-ready and ready to destroy the enemy. For more successful actions, it is necessary to free parts of the corps from the assigned staff of the western regions, since the latter showed instability in battle, treacherous intentions and cases of killing the commanders of the cadre. The issuance of weapons to assigned staff created a reserve of banditry in the area of operations of the corps. It is necessary to take decisive action to protect the troops from acts of sabotage by the local population. Insufficiently informed and unstable elements in the railway transport will disrupt the work

rear..."

Operational summary No. 14

headquarters of the 5th Army of Yugo

Western Front, 11.00

July 2, 1941

"Top secret. State Defense

Committee. In accordance with the will expressed by the working people and the proposals of the Soviet, party, trade union and Komsomol

organizations of the city of Moscow and the Moscow region, the State Defense Committee decides:

1. To mobilize 200 thousand people in the division of the people's militia in the city of Moscow and 70 thousand people in the Moscow region. The leadership of mobilization and formation is entrusted to the commander of the troops of the Moscow Military District, Lieutenant General Comrade Artemyev ...

4. To guide the work on the mobilization of workers in the division of the people's militia and their material support in each region, an emergency troika is created, headed by the first secretary of the Republic of Kazakhstan of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, consisting of members: the district military commissar and the head of the district department of the NKVD. The emergency troika conducts mobilization under the leadership of the headquarters of the Moscow military district, followed by mobilization through the district military registration and

enlistment offices. 5. The formation of divisions is carried out by mobilizing workers from 17 to 55 years old. Those liable for military service of the 1st category of conscripted ages who have mobilization orders in their hands, as well as workers and employees of the factories of the People's Commissariat of Aviation Industry, the People's Commissariat of Arms, the People's Commissariat of Ammunition, machine-tool factories and workers of some, at the discretion of the regional troika, enterprises that carry out especially important defense orders, are exempted from mobilization ... "

GKO Decree No. 10 s / s

dated 04 July 1941

"... Anxious mood, panic, riots, stupid and unnecessary evacuation are increasing every day and hour. This situation was created as a result of incorrect actions of the regional bodies and the regional committee, and in other cases - the inaction of these bodies and the regional committee. The regional executive committee dissolved its departments, most of the workers with their families left. The district councils also

work and do not bring any order in the city. Now in Vitebsk there is not a single institution that would work. Everything closed and self-liquidated, including the regional court, people's courts, regional prosecutor's office, regional health, trade unions, etc. ... on the railway stations are independent carriages, and the wives of these response workers from the NKVD, the regional executive committee, party bodies and others began to leave work without permission ... So, for example, they left the telegraph, telephone network, hospitals and other institutions ... women for permits and exit passes, and when they were denied passes, they said: "Why did the communists leave, their wives with children and property?" Among certain groups of workers, possibly backward, harmful moods and unworthy cries began to appear that the communists, the administration, and so on were fleeing ...

The prison has been liquidated. The police work is weak, and the NKVD is also curtailing its work. Everyone thinks how to evacuate themselves, not paying attention to the work of their institution. The chairman of the Vitebsk City Council, Azarenka, loaded a barrel of beer into a truck prepared by him in order to get drunk on the road, as he usually does in the city in his service ... "

Report of the military prosecutor

Vitebsk garrison

Glinka dated July 5, 1941

"... In some areas, party and Soviet organizations show exceptional confusion and panic. Some leaders of the districts left with their families long before the evacuation of the districts. Leading employees of Grodno, Novograd-Volynsky,

Korostensky, Tarnopolsky districts fled in a panic long before the departure of our units, and instead of taking out state material values, they took out personal belongings using the transport at their disposal. In the Korosten region, the archives of the district committee of the Communist Party of Bolsheviks and various files of regional organizations were left in unclosed rooms ... "

Chief's report

Political propaganda department

Southwestern Front

Mikhailov dated July 6, 1941

"... On the night of July 6, the 101st Rifle Division, for no particular reason, almost in the absence of the enemy, not led by commanders, left the defense front sector and retreated in a panic to the eastern bank of the river. Great, having made a breakthrough in the area of 30 km. As a result, the remaining units of the 24th Rifle Corps were withdrawn to the eastern bank of the river. Great. The collection of scattered units has been going on for two days, but the division has not yet been fully assembled ... "

Order of the commander of the 27th

Army Major General Berzarin

b / n dated July 7, 1941

"Bid The Supreme High Command

And

State Defense Committee is absolutely not satisfied with the work of the command and headquarters of the North-Western Front. Firstly, commanders who do not follow your

orders and, as traitors, abandon positions and retreat from defensive lines without an order, have not yet been punished.

With such a liberal attitude towards cowards, you will not be able to do anything with defense. The fighter detachments are still not working for you, the fruits of their work are not visible, and as a result of the inactivity of the commanders of divisions, corps, armies and the front, parts of the North-Western Front are constantly rolling back.

It's time to stop this disgraceful business. The commander and member of the Military Council, the prosecutor and the head of the 3rd Directorate, immediately leave for the advanced units and deal with cowards and traitors on the spot ... "

Supreme High Command Directive

dated July 10, 1941

"... It should be noted that a number of workers of party and Soviet organizations left the districts to the mercy of fate, fleeing along with the population, sowing panic. The secretary of the RK CP(b)U and the chairman of the RKK of the Khmelnytsky region on 8.7 left the region and fled. On July 5, the district leaders of the Yanushpol region also fled in panic. On July 7, the secretary of the Ulanovsky RK CP (b) U, the chairman of the RIK, the prosecutor, the head of the police shamefully fled the area. The State Bank will be left to fend for itself. Valuables, money transfers, parcels, etc. remained in the regional communications department. In this area, the police department left about 100 rifles without protection ... "

Chief's report

Political propaganda department

Southwestern Front

Mikhailov dated July 11, 1941

"... The troops of the North-Western Front, not always giving a proper rebuff to the enemy, often leave their positions,

without even engaging in a decisive battle. Separate alarmists and cowards not only arbitrarily leave the battle front, but also sow panic among honest and staunch fighters. Commanders and political workers in a number of cases not only do not stop the panic, do not organize and do not lead their units into battle, but with their shameful behavior sometimes further increase the disorganization and panic on the front line ... "

Order of the Commander-in-Chief

troops of the Northwestern

direction Voroshilov ý 3

dated July 14, 1941

"... Often, when several motorcyclists or individual tanks or armored vehicles appear in the rear, big commanders report on the environment, ask for help and even retreat ... It is time, finally, for commanders of all levels to understand that it is unworthy of the honor of the commander of the Workers 'and Peasants' Red Army to fight like that. The headquarters of units and formations, instead of calmly and deeply analyzing the situation and correctly informing higher commanders, in many cases become infected with these disorganizing reports and uncontrollably report them to higher headquarters. So, for example, during July 15, on the site of the 65th Rifle Corps, according to the report of the corps commander himself, large columns of the enemy repeatedly broke through and went to the rear, but in fact there was nothing like this in reality. As a result of creating uncertainty in themselves and their troops, individual commanders, while carrying out combat orders, slow down their actions by all means, which in fact leads to the disruption of the orders given. They often try to attribute their slowness, or rather cowardly caution, to the lack of fuel for cars or other reasons. A lot of

it is possible to cite facts when certain responsible commanders, out of false fear of the enemy, ask for permission to withdraw, citing the lack of ammunition, while the units have 1.5 ammunition. ... "

Directive of the headquarters of the 27th Army

(North-Western Front) w/n

dated July 19, 1941

"...Experience has shown that unsuccessful command and control of troops was largely the result of poor organization of communications, primarily the result of ignoring radio communications as the most reliable form of communication ... The underestimation of radio communications as the most reliable form of communication and the main means of command and control is the result of the inertia of our headquarters, their misunderstanding of the importance of radio communications in the mobile forms of modern combat ...

Stalin, Zhukov

Order of the People's Commissar of Defense

USSR No. 0203 of July 23, 1941

"In a number of parts of the front, some commanders and political workers grossly violate the elementary foundations of the discipline of the Red Army. They do not comply with the established form of clothing, they do not have buttonholes, sleeve insignia and insignia on their overcoats and gymnasts ...

I order:

gymnasts buttonholes, sleeve insignia and badges

differences. The military commissar of the North-Western Front to provide formations and units with all the necessary emblems.

2. From now on, all persons of the command staff who allow violations of uniforms, who have removed their insignia, should be considered as cowards and alarmists, dishonoring the high rank of commander of the Red Army, and bring them to severe responsibility, up to and including bringing them to trial by military tribunals. 3.

Commanders

and military commissars of formations and units to bring to the consciousness of all commanders and political workers the absolute inadmissibility of such violations of uniforms, and to create an intolerant attitude towards violators on the part of the commanding community.

Order of Commander North

Western Front General

Lieutenant Sobennikov No. 044

dated July 26, 1941

"... As a rule, local Soviet and party bodies, located 70-100 km from the front line, are inactive ... Leaders panic evacuate their families, leaving the population to be evacuated to the mercy of fate ... Among the majority of local civilian Soviet and party organizations, complete confusion reigns. District leaders "sit on suitcases", cease their activities and are the first to flee long before the enemy appeared in their districts. In Shpolyansky district, as a result of the loss of leadership by regional organizations, the evacuation turned into a stampede. Many chairmen of collective farms and village councils fled, taking collective farm and public funds. The employees of the City Council fled (there was one

chairman), the district committee of the Komsomol fled. This caused panic among the population ... In Zvenigorodka, when only enemy motorcyclists appeared, absolutely everyone fled, with the exception of one telegraph operator, through whom it was necessary to establish the actual situation in Zvenigorodka. From the city of Balta, the leaders fled in a panic when the enemy was still far from him. Stores were left unattended. A huge amount of sewn Red Army linen was left at the garment factory. All this was robbed by various crooks and crooks ...

The inaction of the local authorities, the flight at the very first rumors of the approach of the enemy creates an opportunity for anti-Soviet agitation. In the Shpolyansky district, at work on a fragment of an anti-tank ditch, a speech by one former kulak took place, who openly said: "Stop working, because Hitler is coming to liberate us. I will soon get my 30 hectares of land, my horses, cows and so on."

No action has been taken on this type..."

Chief's report

political department of the Southern

Front No. 6194

dated August 6, 1941

"The Headquarters of the Supreme High Command proposes to urgently

convey: 1. Is Kyiv left by our units or not? 2. If

Kyiv is abandoned, are the bridges blown up or not? 3.

If bridges are blown up, then who guarantees that

Are the bridges really blown up?

Rate Directive No. 002202

dated September 21, 1941 (given

full text without abbreviations)

"Dear Joseph Vissarionovich! You should understand more than I do that the socialist economy and the development of industry have far and far outstripped people's consciousness... This is what happened in the army. In terms of quality, our weapons are superior to German ones (automatic weapons, artillery, grenades, Katyushas). Theoretically, based on the statements of Engels, Lenin, yours, at the beginning of the war, from its first minutes, our people should have shown unprecedented examples of courage, devotion, steadfastness, heroism and the like. And he showed. But not on a large scale, but on a limited scale. I have been at the forefront since August 1941, not just as a soldier,

but also as a writer, as a psychologist, as a researcher studying what is happening. I saw a lot of examples of heroism, but I also saw how whole platoons, companies went over to the side of the Germans, surrendered with weapons without any "external" reasons for this. If there were no external ones, then there were internal ones. And it makes me think about what's going on. Yes, Joseph Vissarionovich! Consciousness is too far behind the socialist economy and, mainly, in relation to the collective farmers. The workers did not surrender to the Germans, but surrendered, collective farmers with the psychology of peasants went over to the side of the enemy ... I was surrounded. Two months was in the occupied territory. I passed dozens of villages in the Oryol and Tula regions, I talked with hundreds of collective farmers, encircled, carrying with me my party card and military certificate. And I heard and I saw how the small-property peasant soul took over many people, put them against the Soviet regime. They abandoned collective farms with pleasure and haste, divided and dismantled horses, harness, implements, crops, put their hut, yard, garden in order ... In the meantime, there is a hut, a garden, a cow,

pigs, sheep, chickens, etc., until then there will also be a small-ownership ideology among the peasants. And hence their attitude towards socialism, communism..."

Letter from a member of the CPSU (b)

N. Bogdanov in the name

I. V. Stalin

"In a number of textile factories in the Ivanovo region, there have recently been bagpipes of individual groups of workers who arbitrarily quit work before the end of the working day. Such facts took place at three factories in the Vichugsky district ... At two factories in the Furmanovsky region ... and at some other enterprises in the Ivanovo region ... Until recently, Party leaders were afraid to go to the shops, because they did not know how to answer a number of questions to the workers, for example, why our the army retreats, gives up cities, etc. We have witnessed such facts. In the workshop alone, 30-40 minutes before the start of the night shift, about 120 workers gathered, breaking into three groups, each of which had a lively conversation. One discussed the question of who is better to live with: under Soviet rule or under Hitler, and the other argued that Hitler would emerge victorious in the war. In the third group, they said that our army was hungry, undressed, unarmed, and that our Red Army soldiers at the front were "mowed down like a scythe." Among the workers there was not a single agitator who could explain, tell, answer exciting questions and repulse slanderers and presumptuous ... At a meeting of workers of the factory named after. Nogina's worker Kulakova declared: "Hitler didn't take bread by force, we gave it to him ourselves, but now they don't give it to us, are they protecting him?" Worker Lobova expressed the following: "We go hungry, there is no urine to work. The authorities receive in a closed store, they can live. Pom. masters Sobolev and master Kiselev stated:

"If we are taken into the army, we will show the communists how to starve us." A worker at the spinning factory of the Bolshevik plant said to the communist Agapova: "God save the victory of the Soviet power, and you, the Communists, will be hanged all over." Komsomol member Chernyshova said: "Whoever starts a strike, we will support it." The usual conversations in factories, passed on to each other, that there was a strike at one or another factory and their bread ration was increased to a kilogram ... "

memorandum

employees Organizational

instructor department of the Central Committee

VKP(b), September 10, 1941

Chapter 14

TANK CASE - 1

Following the voices of the 41st, the voices of 2007 are clearly audible: "This does not prove anything! Where did

you get it? What an addiction to collecting all sorts of abominations! Why does the author see only one negative? Where is the heroic defense of the Brest Fortress, where is the feat of 28 Panfilov heroes .."

I understand the indignation of readers. I was also born in the USSR. But I'm in no hurry to apologize. Elementary common sense suggests that if the largest army in the world, armed to the teeth, was defeated, defeated and driven hundreds of kilometers from the western borders in a few weeks, then, most likely, the heroic episodes of hostilities were rare exceptions against the backdrop of a general catastrophic collapse. As for the "Brest fortress", i.e. the Brest fortified area (UR No. 62), the unfortunate (if not shameful) story of its defeat was described back in 1961 in a secret (at the time of publication) study "Combat operations troops of the 4th Army, "written by Colonel General Sandalov, the former chief of staff of the very 4th Army of the Western Front, in the defense zone of which UR No. 62 was located. By June 1, 41, on the 180-kilometer front of the Brest 128 long-term firing structures, and another 380 DOS were under construction. There were so few of them because most of these 180 kilometers fell on the swamps of the Belarusian Polesye, which were absolutely impassable for large military formations, and the defense units of the UR covered only rare passable sections of the border in those places. The Germans practically did not notice the existence of the Brest fortified area. In the report of the headquarters of Army Group "Center" (June 22, 1941, 20 hours 30 minutes) we find

only a brief statement: *"Border fortifications were broken through in the sectors of all corps of the 4th Army"* (this is precisely the defense zone of the Brest UR). (71, p. 35) And in the memoirs of Guderian, whose tank group advanced in the Brest direction in the first hours of the war, we will not find a single

mentions of some battles during the breakthrough of the defense line of the Brest fortified area. Direct participants in the capture of Brest left memories like this:

"In the morning, the 45th reconnaissance battalion (estimate the composition of the forces allocated to capture the most important road junction. - M.S.) received the task of clearing the city of Brest-Litovsk, neutralizing the enemy group, probably located at the main railway station, and ensuring the protection of objects in the nearest district ... In the city itself, except for the shocked and frightened civilian population, there was no enemy. A strong strike force then proceeded to the barracks, located on the outskirts of the city, where, according to one civilian, a group of Russian soldiers were preparing for defense. But this building was empty and abandoned. Only in one of the rooms we found 150 brand new Zeiss binoculars with Soviet stars imprinted on them. Apparently, they forgot to take them away during the retreat..." (72, p. 17) Can the stories of the "beaten Nazi warriors" be trusted? In this case, yes. In the combat report of the headquarters of the 4th

Army No. 05 (11 h. 55 min. June 22) we read: *"The 6th Rifle Division was forced to surrender Brest by 7.00 am (how many minutes did these "fights" last? - M.S.), and the scattered units of the 42nd Rifle Division gather at the turn of Kurneshcha, Velka, Cherno, Khvedkovizh and put themselves in order ..."* (71. p. 30) As for the defense of the Brest citadel itself, in his monograph Sandalov directly and without equivocation writes: *"The Brest Fortress turned out to be a trap and played a fatal role at the beginning of the war for the troops of the 28th Rifle Corps and the entire 4th Army ... a large number of personnel of the units of the 6th and 42nd Rifle Divisions remained in the fortress not because they had the task of defending the fortress, but because they could not get out of it ... "* (26) Which is absolutely logical. The fortress is built in such a way that it would be difficult to enter it. As a result, it is difficult to withdraw a large mass of people and equipment from any fortress at once. Sandalov writes that there was only one (northern) gate to exit the Brest Fortress to the east, then it was necessary to cross the Mukhavets River encircling the fortress. It was through this "eye of the needle" under a hail of enemy shells that two rifle divisions tried to break out - almost 30 thousand people. Absolutely illogical was the decision to drive into the "trap"

dilapidated bastions of the Brest Fortress, two divisions, but the reasons why this was done will hardly ever be established. (73, p. 181) The end result is known *"Heavy fighting in the fortress lasted another seven days, until 7 thousand surviving Red Army soldiers, starving and exhausted from a desperate struggle, surrendered. The losses of the 45th infantry division of the Wehrmacht amounted to 482 killed and 1,000 wounded."* (72, p. 18) What kind of "fortress defense" is this, if the losses of the attackers are many times less than the losses of the defenders?

The enemy also paid cheaply for the breakthrough of the Brest UR. *"Most of the personnel of the 17th machine-gun battalion retreated in the direction of Vysokoe, where the headquarters of the 62nd fortified area was located ... In the same direction, a group of personnel of the 18th bullet battalion from the Brest region retreated ..."* (26) Like this, calmly and melancholy, Sandalov describes the fact of mass desertion that took place in the first hours of the war. Happens. In war, as in war. In any army in the world there is confusion, panic, and flight. That is why there are commanders in the army, in order to cheer up some in such a situation, to shoot others, but to achieve the fulfillment of a combat mission. What did the commander of the 62nd UR do when crowds of Red Army soldiers who abandoned their pillboxes ran to his headquarters in Vysokoe? *"The commander of the Brest fortified area, Major General Puzyrev, with part of the units that had retreated to him in Vysokoe, on the very first day withdrew to Velsk (40 km from the border), and then further to the east ..."* (26) That's it - he just took it and "departed". The air regiments of the Air Force of the Western Front, as we were told, "relocated" to the deep rear in order to receive new aircraft there. Instead of those previously abandoned at airfields. But what was Comrade Puzyrev going to get in the rear? A new mobile pillbox on wheels? Perhaps these questions were asked to him by someone. The answers are still unknown. *"Born 1890 Commandant of the 62nd fortified area. Died November 18, 1941. There is no data on the place of burial"* - that's all that the Military History Journal tells readers. How, where, under what circumstances General Puzyrev died, why in the fall of 1941 he still continued to be listed as the "commandant" of the non-existent fortified area - all this is still shrouded in the thick darkness of state secrets. Senior military commander of General Puzyrev, assistant commander of the Western Front for

major general I.P. Mikhailin died from a stray fragment in the early morning of June 23, 1941. In the memoirs of I.V. Boldin (former deputy commander of the Western Front), some details of this accident are also found: *Major Mikhailin accidentally found out where I was and came to my command post...* General Mikhailin did not retreat "together with the troops". He clearly overtook them. On June 23, 1941, Boldin's command post was located 15 km northeast of Bialystok, that is, more than 100 km from the border. Soldiers "on their own two feet" don't stomp so much in two days ... And with all this, some pillboxes of the Brest UR fought until the end of June

1941. The Germans had already occupied Bialystok and Minsk, reached Bobruisk, began crossing the Berezina, and at that time 3- I company of the 17th battalion held 4 pillboxes on the banks of the Bug near the Polish town of Semyatyche until June 30! Concrete floors withstood all the shelling, and only having the opportunity to surround the pillboxes and break through their walls with heavy land mines, the Germans were able to suppress the resistance of a handful of heroes ..

Having done away with all the "living pictures", we will now try to move from the particular to the general, from subjective opinions and individual episodes of the war to dry and concrete figures. Let's start with the simplest. From the "accounting" accounting of inanimate, but very expensive items - tanks. There were not so many of them (not millions, but only thousands) and some quantitative estimates of their use are possible. If not for all 29 mechanized corps of the Red Army, then at least for several of the most

powerful ones. The 6th mechanized corps of the Western Front was in the first place in terms of staffing with military equipment and experienced command personnel. Let us recall once again that none of the Soviet tank armies that completed "the defeat of the fascist beast in its lair" in 1945 had the same number of armored vehicles (1,130 tanks) that was part of the 6th MK in June 1941. 4,779 vehicles, 1,042 tractors motorcycles and (tractors) made this corps truly 294 "mechanized" (one vehicle per 5 personnel). It would also be appropriate to compare with the enemy. In the summer of 1943, as part of the entire tank group of German troops

on the Kursk Bulge, there were 347 tanks of "new types" (147 "tigers" and 200 "panthers"). Every conscientious schoolboy should know that the German command placed great hopes on such a massive use of new heavy tanks. This thesis is invariably present in any text devoted to the Battle of Kursk, which Soviet historians called (and still call) "the largest tank battle of the Second World War." The 6th MK was armed with more than 400 of the latest KV and T-34 tanks. Both in the technical (prohibitive in relation to the main calibers of the Wehrmacht's anti-tank artillery tank booking), and in the psychological (the appearance of huge 50-ton armored monsters from the thicket of Belarusian forests) the meeting with the 6th mechanized corps should have been a terrible, stunning surprise for the German infantry. The 6th MK did not fulfill any of the tasks assigned to it and was completely defeated in less than one week. There are almost no documents that could be used to

recreate the picture of this incredible defeat (at least 42 volumes of the "Collections of Combat Documents" do not contain such documents). All the more so, memoir literature can help little - there was no one to write memoirs. The commander of the 6th MK, Major General Khatskilevich, died along with his mechanized corps on June 25, 1941. The exact circumstances of his death are still unknown. A few days later, near the town of Klepachi, Slonim district, an armored car was shot down, in which the officers of the headquarters of the 6th MK tried to take out the body of the deceased commander. At the same time, the head of the artillery of the corps, Major General A.S. Mitrofanov, was mortally wounded. The chief of staff of the 6th MK, Colonel Koval E.S., went missing. The commander of the 4th Panzer Division of the 6th Mechanized Corps, Major General A. G. Potaturchev, was captured, after being released from the concentration camp in Dachau, he was arrested by the NKVD and died in prison in July 1947. He was posthumously rehabilitated in 1953. The commander of the 29th motorized division of the 6th mechanized corps, Major General I.P. Bikzhanov, was captured, after being released until December 1945, *"passed a special check in the NKVD."* In April 1950, he was dismissed due to illness. He lived to be 93 years old, but did not publish his memoirs. Of the senior commanders of the 6th MK, only

commander of the 7th Panzer Division, Major General S.V. Borzilov (died in action near Perekop on September 28, 1941). The report compiled by General Borzilov on August 4, 1941 to the Main Armored Directorate of the Red Army on the combat operations of the 7th Panzer Division is so far the only available document. Therefore, we will quote it in sufficient detail: "... On June 22, 1941, the division

was staffed in personnel: private by 98 percent, junior command personnel by 60 percent. and command staff by 80 percent. The material part: heavy tanks - 51, medium tanks - 150, BT-5/7 - 125, T-26 - 42 units (thus, in Borzilov's division alone there were two hundred of the latest T-34 and KV tanks with anti-ballistic armor). By June 22, the provision of the division with combat equipment: 76-mm shells - 1 bq, there were no armor-piercing shells of 76 mm, 45-mm shells - 1.5 bq, B-70 and KB-70 gasoline - 3 refueling, diesel fuel - 1 refueling ...

On June 22, at 2 o'clock, a password was received through a communications delegate about a combat alert with the opening of the "red package". After 10 minutes, a combat alert was announced to parts of the division, and at 4 hours 30 minutes. parts of the division concentrated at the assembly point for combat alert ... at 22:00 on June 22, the division received an order to move to a new concentration area - st. Valp and the subsequent task: to destroy the tank division that had broken through to the Bialystok area ... The division, following the order, encountered traffic jams created on all roads due to the disorderly retreat of the rear of the army from Bialystok. The division, being on the march and in the area of concentration from 04:00 to 09:00 and from 11:00 to 14:00 on June 23, was under enemy air strikes all the time. During the period of the march and being in the concentration area up to 14 hours, the division had losses: 63 tanks were knocked out, all the rear of the regiments were defeated ... The enemy tank division was not in the Belsk area, due to which the division was not used. (Translated from Russian into Russian, this means that the entire first day of the war, the division was simply inactive. On the second day, it was sent by the commander of the 10th Army Golubev, due to panic reports from his subordinates, south to Belsk, but since there were no enemy tank units in the band of the 10th Army was simply not there, so Borzilov could not find them.)

... On June 24–25, the division, following the order of the corps commander and Marshal Comrade Kulik, struck: 14th TP - Old Dubno and further Grodno, 13th TP - Kuznitsa and further Grodno from the west, where up to two infantry battalions were destroyed and up to two artillery batteries of the enemy (this is **the first and only** mention of the participation of the 7th TD in the counterattack of the mechanized corps of the Western Front). After completing the task (it was still very far away before the "completion" of the task - to advance through Grodno to the crossings on the Neman near Merkin and strike at the flank and rear of the 3rd Wehrmacht Tank Group) parts of the division concentrated in the *Kuznitsa and Staroe Dubno* area, while parts of the division lost **18** tanks burned out and stuck in the swamps ... In parts of the division, fuel and lubricants were running out, it was not possible to refuel due to the lack of containers and head warehouses, however, they managed to get one gas station from the burned-out warehouses Kuznitsa and m. Krinki (in general, fuels and lubricants were mined as anyone could).

By the end of the day on June 25, an order was received from the corps commander to withdraw beyond the river. Svisloch. (This order, probably the last in his life, Khatskilevich gave, following the order of the commander of the Western Front Pavlov, who on June 25 at 16 hours 45 minutes, on the basis of the directive of the Headquarters and its representative at the headquarters of the Western Front, Marshal Shaposhnikov, ordered the withdrawal of all front troops to the line of the Shchara River, i.e., 100-150 km east of the border. True, from what follows it becomes obvious that the order for a general withdrawal only "legalized" the disorderly flight that had begun.) According to preliminary data, the 4th TD of the 6th mechanized corps on the night of June 26, she moved beyond the river. Svisloch, as a result of which the flank of the 36th cavalry division was opened ... At 21:00 on June 26, units of the 36th cd and the 29th motorized rifle division (6th mechanized corps) randomly began to withdraw. I took measures to restore the situation, but this was not successful. I gave the order to cover the retreating units and, in the area of Cape Krinki, made a second attempt to delay the retreating units, where I managed to detain the 128th infantry regiment (this is not an enemy regiment, this is our regiment from its 6th mechanized corps, everything is trying to detain Borzilov) and on the night of On June 27 he crossed the river. Svisloch, which was the beginning of a general disorderly retreat ... June 29 at 11 o'clock with the remnants of equipment (3 vehi

east of Slonim, where he fought on June 29 and 30. On June 30, at 22 o'clock, he moved with a detachment into the forests and further to the Pinsk swamps along the Gomel-Vyazma route ... The entire material part was left on the territory occupied by the enemy, from Bialystok to Slonim. Abandoned materiel was rendered unusable. The material part was abandoned due to the lack of fuel and lubricants and a repair fund ... " (74)

Now let's take a breath and try to sum up the simplest, arithmetic results. By the beginning of hostilities, the 7th TD had **368 tanks**. Even before the start of the first air raids, the division left the place of permanent deployment and did not suffer any tangible losses from the "sudden strike" on June 22. But it is noteworthy that even on March 19, 1999, Krasnaya Zvezda described these events in its usual spirit: *"The tank parks were blazing with fire. After rushing about for some time in impotent despair, almost unarmed (???) tankers, together with infantry and border guards, retreated, as they used to say in the old days, into retreat ... German pilots ruthlessly (the main army newspaper of the country believes that those who did the enemy have to spare?) bombed and shot people from a strafing flight ... "* During the counteroffensive on June 24–25, the 7th Panzer Division fought with enemy infantry with a strength of up to one regiment (it can be assumed that it was the 481st Infantry Regiment 256- th Wehrmacht infantry division, which really fought on June 24–25 with Soviet tanks in the area of the town of Kuznitsa), while losing only **18 tanks**, and not all of them were hit by German anti-tank artillery - several vehicles, as the divisional commander writes, simply got stuck in the swamps. Borzilov in his report does not specify which tanks were lost.

Nevertheless, knowing the capabilities of the anti-tank artillery of the German infantry divisions and the divisions of "assault guns" attached to them, armed with a short-barreled 75-mm "cigarette butt", it can be assumed with a high degree of certainty that the main strike force of the division - the latest T-34 and KV tanks - remained whole and unharmed. In his other report (dated July 28, 1941), General Borzilov writes: *"When our tanks appeared, enemy tanks (actually they were self-propelled "assault guns") did not accept the battle, but hurriedly retreated ... the T-34 machine perfectly withstands the blows of a 37-mm gun, not to mention the KV."* (63. p. 118)

Even taking into account the fact that **63 tanks** were lost on the march, by the morning of June 26 in the 7th

no less than **287 tanks should have remained**. In parentheses, we note that none of the 17 Wehrmacht tank divisions on June 22, 1941 had such a number of tanks in its composition (on average, there were 192 tanks per German division), not to mention the quality ... And now, after three days retreat, with virtually no contact with the enemy (and the German infantry, with all their desire, could not catch up with the retreating motorized army), from the entire 7th Panzer Division there remains an "infantry detachment with **three tanks**".

However, Borzilov's report also indicated an objective (at first glance) reason for the defeat of the division and the loss of all materiel: "lack of fuel and lubricants" It would seem - what else is there to argue about? There is no fuel - there is no combat-ready tank division. Alas, with all due respect to the memory of General Borzilov, we will not rush to conclusions, but will use a calculator and our own head. One refueling of diesel fuel was in the division before the start of hostilities. Another received already during the battles. There were three gas stations or more. Now let's translate these "gas stations" into understandable kilometers. The most outdated T-26 tank available in the 7th division had a cruising range of 170 km on one gas station. Three gas stations - half a thousand kilometers. The most powerful and modern HF is the same 180 km (it's hard to carry 50 tons of steel). Two gas stations for diesel HF is 360 km. High-speed BTs and medium T-34s had a cruising range of 300 or more kilometers at one gas station. In fact, the 7th Panzer Division, randomly circling along the route Bialystok - Valpa - Sokulka - Volkovysk - Slonim, traveled no more than 250 km for the entire time from June 22 to June 29. At the same time, it was completely impossible to abandon all the equipment *"due to the lack of fuel and lubricants"*. Moreover, the territory of the "Bialystok ledge" was literally packed with fuel and ammunition depots. Directly in the "wandering" zone of the 6th MK there were 12 (twelve) stationary fuel depots. Namely: 9205th and 10405th (Bialystok), 925th and 10385th (Belsk), 9235th and 10195th (Monki), 9195th and 10205th (Grodno); 9295th and 10335th (Bridges), 9225th and 10445th (Volkovysk). The distances between these warehouses did not exceed 60–80 km. Even for a dilapidated "lorry" with a gas tank, this is no more than two hours away. Was there fuel in these warehouses? Even in the most "stagnant years", the Military Historical Journal (No. 8/1966) informed re

*district warehouses, including ... 25 fuel depots ... Total losses by this time amounted to: fuel - more than 50,000 tons (50% of stocks) ". A fully equipped mechanized corps for a 100 km march required **less than 300 tons of fuel**. On those fuel reserves that remained in the occupied territory, next to abandoned tanks. **The 6th MK could reach Vladivostok and return back to Bialystok ...** According to modern data, on the territory of the Western OVO there were even more mobilization fuel reserves - 264 thousand tons. (75, p. 351) It is no accident, apparently, that the chief of the general staff of the Wehrmacht, F. Halder, in an entry dated July 1, notes that " *about one third of the fuel consumption was covered by trophy reserves.*" In absolute terms, this means that, **on average, every day** the Germans "received" **2,900 tons of fuel** from Soviet depots theoretically unknown to them and theoretically destroyed during the retreat . (12) The tank divisions of the 6th mechanized corps "failed" to find one-tenth of this number in order to at least orderly retreat to the east. With tanks...*

The situation on the Southwestern Front differed significantly from that which developed in the first weeks of the war on the Western Front. In Belarus, the Germans, advancing with two tank groups from Brest and Vilnius to Minsk, were able to surround most of the Red Army forces. The defeat of the troops on the battlefield was supplemented by the pogrom carried out by Stalin among the command of the Western Front. As a result, there are almost no staff documents or well-informed witnesses left, and the historian has to restore the picture of events with the same laboriousness and reliability with which paleobiologists reconstruct the appearance of a dinosaur from a pair of fossilized bones. But in Western Ukraine, events developed differently. On the entire southern theater of operations from the swamps of Polesye to the Black Sea coast, the Wehrmacht command had only one tank group at its disposal, and the Germans failed to carry out a major operation to encircle the Soviet troops in the first days of the war. Even the mechanized corps, which had lost almost all military equipment, were able to retreat to the east, retaining their command, combat banners and documents. And Stalin's reaction to the collapse of the defense of the Southwestern Front was incomprehensibly mild. As a result, h

detailed, sometimes on dozens of pages, reports on the combat operations of the mechanized corps and numerous memoirs of the participants in the events. In a word - there is

something to work with. We note right away that all figures relating to the pre-war number of tank formations of the Red Army should be considered only as indicative. There was little order in their accounting. For example, the number of tanks of the 8th MK given below is indicated according to a solid monograph (3), but in the memoirs of the former commander of the 8th MK, General Ryabyshev, the figure is 932 tanks, according to the Kiev Museum of the Great Patriotic War, the 8th MK was 813 tanks, in the famous, very first open publication of the number of Soviet mechanized corps (VIZH 4/1989), the figure was given 858 ... The same situation is with other corps.

Recall once again the pre-war grouping of tank troops of the Kyiv OVO (South-Western Front). In the first echelon of the front (5th, 6th, 26th, 12th Armies), at a distance of 70-130 km from the state border, the following mechanized corps were deployed (from north to south): (3, 76)

	Район дислокации	Танки, всего	в том числе КВ и Т-34	БА	Авто-машинны	Тягачи
22-й МК	Вл Вольинский - Ровно	712	31	82/70	1 226	114
15-й МК	Броды - Кременец	749	136	160/94	2 035	165
4-й МК	Львов	979	414	175/89	2 854	274
8-й МК	Дрогобыч-Стрый	899	169	172/87	3 237	359
16-й МК	Станислав - Черновцы	478	4	118/71	1 777	193

Note. Armored vehicles, the first number is the total number, the second is including BA-10s armed with a 45 mm cannon.

Even if this table were the only source of military historical information, then it would be enough to draw a conclusion about the unambiguously offensive plans of the Soviet command. It is quite obvious that there is a powerful strike force of three mechanized corps (the axis of which is the 4th MK, which is equal to all the other mechanized corps put together in the number of newest tanks) at the very tip of the "Lviv ledge". It is equally obvious that in the most threatened directions - near

northern and southern bases of the "protrusion" - much weaker (22nd and 16th) mechanized corps were deployed. It is worth noting the fact that the number of tractors (tractors) in all of the above mechanized corps significantly exceeds the regular number of artillery systems of the mechanized corps (24 guns of 76 mm caliber and 76 howitzers of 122 mm / 152 mm caliber), not to mention the fact that the KV and T-34s with their 500-horsepower diesel engine could tow a divisional three-inch gun (weight 1.5 tons) or a 122-mm howitzer (weight 2.5 tons) like a "fluff". In the second echelon of the operational formation of the Southwestern Front, there were three more mechanized corps (9th MK, 19th MK, 24th MK), which were armed with about 1 thousand tanks, although much weaker (light T-26 and BT, and in the 19th MK - and 152 T-37/38 floating machine-gun tankettes, the use of which as line tanks was contrary to all

standards). Probably, a few words should also be said about the enemy's tank forces. Army Group South included the 1st Panzer Group of the Wehrmacht, consisting of three (3rd, 48th, 14th) tank corps. There are five tank divisions in all, armed with 728 tanks by the start of hostilities, including 100 "heavy" Pz-IVs and 255 "medium" Pz-IIIs with a 50-mm cannon. In fact, the 14th Panzer Corps with its 9th Panzer Division appeared on Soviet territory only on June 27-28, so in the first days of the war there were four German Panzer divisions in the entire southern theater of operations, the number of tanks in which did not exceed 600 (taking into account "assault guns", self-propelled anti-tank guns on the chassis of light tanks, captured French tanks, the total number of Wehrmacht armored vehicles could reach 700 units). Any of the "three heroes" (15th MK, 4th MK, 8th MK) surpassed the entire 1st Wehrmacht Tank Group in terms of the number of tanks with absolute superiority in quality. Only in the writings of Soviet "historians" did the notorious "two-year experience of waging a modern war" allegedly accumulated by German tank crews exist. Of the five tank divisions of the 1st Panzer Group, not a single one participated in the Polish campaign, and only two took part in the invasion of **France** (9th and 11th), the 14th TD managed to fight one week in Yugoslavia before the "Barbarossa". The 13th and 16th TDs (created in October 1940 on the basis of infantry divisions) did not

until June 22, 1941 took any part in the hostilities. (11) The 1st Panzer

Group did a lot of trouble. It defeated and pushed back hundreds of kilometers from the border the rifle and mechanized corps of the Southwestern Front, broke through the line of fortified areas on the old border, and in mid-July 1941 reached Kyiv and Belaya Tserkov. Then the German panzer divisions turned 90 degrees and rushed to the south of Ukraine, to the rear of the disorderly retreating troops of the 6th and 12th Armies, which armies (more precisely, their remnants) were surrounded in the Uman region and surrendered. About a hundred thousand people were taken prisoner, including the commander of the 12th Army, Major General Ponedelin and the commander of the 6th Army, Lieutenant General Muzychenko. In early September, the 1st TGr crossed the Dnieper in the Kremenchug region and rushed north, towards the

2nd TGr advancing across the Desna River. On September 15, German tank units joined in the Dubna-Lokhvitsa area (170 km east of Kyiv), thus surrounding the 21st, 5th, 37th, 26th and 38th Armies. According to the reports of the Wehrmacht command, more than six hundred thousand people fell into German captivity in a giant "Kiev bag". Not stopping there, the 1st Panzer Group turned around again, this time 180 degrees, and practically without an operational pause, on September 24, began an offensive south to the Sea of Azov. Having advanced 450 km in 15 days, the Germans surrounded and captured another 100 thousand people in the Melitopol region, then, turning 90 degrees, went another 300 km to the east and by November 21, 1941 occupied Taganrog. Total: more than one and a half thousand kilometers of the route (not counting the inevitable maneuvering during hostilities) along the "anti-tank" Soviet roads, on tanks with narrow tracks and low-p

In the middle of this "long journey" (at the end of August - early September), the irretrievable losses of tanks in the 1st TGr amounted to: 33 Pz-IV, 101 Pz-III (all modifications), 37 light Pz-II, (2 command PzBef **Total - 183 tanks in two months of fighting.** (10, p. 206) In addition, a significant number of tanks were damaged and temporarily disabled . and tanks restored in two months, of course, there were more

large). Thus, the number of combat-ready tanks in the 1st TGr more than halved by the beginning of September, **to 370 units**. Taking these figures into account as a basis for comparison, let us now turn to an analysis of the losses of the three most powerful mechanized corps of the Southwestern Front, armed with hundreds of the latest tanks.

Let's start with the most powerful 4th mechanized corps. The corps included, as expected, three divisions: two armored (8th and 32nd) and one motorized (81st). The number of tanks that were in service with these divisions at the beginning of hostilities (not counting the T-37/38 amphibious tankettes) is indicated in the following table:

	KB	T-34	T-28	BT	T-26	Всего:
8-я тд	50	140	68	31	36	325
32-я тд	49	173	0	31	70	323
81-я мд	0	0	0	270	0	271
Всего:	99	313	270	332	106	918

The most surprising number in the above table is the number of the division, which was armed with the largest number of new types of tanks among all the tank divisions of the Southwestern Front. The 32nd Panzer Division was a new division that began its formation in April 1941, as part of the enigmatic decision to deploy 20 new mechanized corps. The 4th mechanized corps was not included in the purely "newborn", but in one of the new corps (15th MK), a complete and well-prepared 10th TD was transferred from the previous composition of the 4th MK. She was supposed to be replaced by the 32nd TD. As the commander of the 32nd TD Colonel E. G. Pushkin writes in his report dated August 2, 1941 (he died in the rank of Lieutenant General of the Tank Forces on March 11, 1944): "... The rank and file consisted mainly of the April *and May conscription of 1941 of the year. Due to the understaffing of the commanding staff and the short training period, the headquarters of the units were not put together ... Combat training was accelerated. There were no teaching aids and exhibits. For accelerated training of crews, special teams of workers and engineers from factories producing tanks were involved ... The 32nd howitzer artillery regiment did not have time to fire a single gun. The personnel was not prepared for firing in the field ...*

The technical training of the personnel, especially the driver's staff, was insufficient ... " (63, p. 181)

As a result, the 32nd TD, by the start of hostilities, was a record number of the latest tanks, on which they had to fight, in modern colloquial terms, "green greens" - and this despite the fact that the Red Army had thousands of tankers with experience of the war in Spain, at Khalkhin Gol and in Finland. This strange decision was aggravated by the very low staffing of the division with vehicles and tractors. Of the total number of 2,854 vehicles of the 4th mechanized corps of the 32nd division, only 420 vehicles were left, and out of 274 tractors and tractors - only 24. It is difficult to believe in this, but these are the numbers that are in the report of the division commander. (63, pp. 189–192) According

to pre-war plans, the 4th MK was supposed to operate on in the direction of the main attack, advancing as part of the "cavalry mechanized army" from the Zholkev-Yavorov region *"with the task of reaching the Krasnik, Lublin region and, in cooperation with the 5th, 6th and 19th Armies and the Air Force of the front, destroy the enemy's Lublin grouping, at the same time capture part of the forces western bank of the river Vistula near Pulawy, Solets and Annopol.* (4, p. 497) In practice, the same task was assigned to the troops of the Southwestern Front by the famous Directive No. 3 (sent to the headquarters of the fronts at 21:15 on June 22, 1941): "... To the armies of the Southwestern Front , *firmly holding the state border with Hungary, with concentric strikes in the general direction of Lublin by the forces of the 5th A and 6th A, at least five mechanized corps and the entire aviation of the front, encircle and destroy the enemy grouping advancing on the front Vladimir Volynsky, Krystynopol, by the end 24.6 to*

seize the Lublin region ... " (6, p. 441) In brackets, we note that, compared with the pre-war plans, Directive 3 was still a very cautious, moderate and restrained document, since it involved only one strike (on Lublin) instead of three (to Krakow - Katowice, to Sandomierz - Kielce, to Lublin), provided for by the May (1941) "Considerations on the Strategic Deployment Plan". All these plans with the beginning of a real war "lived" no more than a few hours. Already on the night of June 22-23 at the command post of the Yugo-Zapadny

front in Ternopil with the participation of the chief of the General Staff (and one of the signatories of Directive No. 3) Zhukov, who arrived from Moscow, fundamentally new

decisions were made. The Soviet generals abandoned their intention to "play their own game" and voluntarily

gave the initiative to the enemy. From a deep offensive operation (the theoretical development of which is invariably cited in all thick books as an example of the highest level of Soviet military science) it was decided to abandon in favor of a hasty "patching holes" through hastily organized counter tank attacks. These attacks on the two tank corps of the Wehrmacht advancing in the Lutsk-Radekhov zone were to be carried out by the 22nd MK and the 15th MK. The 4th MK and 8th MK, located at the very tip of the "Lvov ledge", were supposed to retreat back, 100-150 km east of the border, catch up with the German "tank wedge" rushing deep into the operational formation of the Soviet troops and strike him in flank and rear. True, for this it was still necessary to know exactly where this "wedge" would move after breaking through the line

of border fortifications ... *"The enemy, who started the war with an unexpected blow, dictated his will to us, broke our plans"* (58) So, after spending only a dozen words, N.K. Popel (in the summer of 1941 - commissar of the 8th MK) said almost everything: about pre-war plans (according to which his corps moved to cross the border river in the very first hours of the war), and about that the German attack in these plans was not supposed in any way, and about the command of the front, which allowed the enemy from the very first

days of the war to "dictate their will to us." The implementation of the decision taken by the chief of the General Staff and the commander of the front troops was immediately thwarted by the commander of the 6th Army, Muzychenko. Easily and naturally, Commander-6 ignored the repeatedly repeated demands of senior commanders in position and rank and "did not give up his" 4th MK. Moreover, he even tried (and not in vain!) "to dig" from the front command of the "foreign" 8th MK. But more on that later. Ultimately, the most powerful 4th mechanized corps did not take over the city of Lublin "by the end of June 24", nor catch up and smash the 1st Tank Group of the Wehrmacht. Huge, many-kilometer columns of tanks, cars, tractors of the 4th mech

"enchanted triangle" Nemirów - Mostiska - Lviv as a "fire brigade", with the help of which Muzychenko tried to stop the advance of the German infantry to Lviv. In the report of the commander of the 32nd TD, the events of those days are described as follows: "...

On June 23, 1941, the Division received an order, in cooperation with the 8th Panzer and 81st Motorized Rifle Divisions, to surround and destroy the enemy in the area ... Without going 30 km, she received at 10 o'clock on the march, the second task is to destroy enemy tanks in the area of \u200b\u200bm. Bridges Velke. The division column had to turn 180 degrees along one road. Upon arrival in the area of \u200b\u200bMosti Velke, the division of enemy tanks did not find it.

At 5 p.m., a new order was received from the commander of the 6th Army to destroy an air assault and 300 enemy tanks in the Kamenka Strumilov area. Parts of the division and the tank group Golyas began to fulfill the new order, but no enemy tanks were found there, and there were units in Kamenka Strumilov ... The tank regiments of the division made a march on average up to 100 km per day ...

24.6.41 By 1 o'clock in the morning the division concentrated in the area ... At 11 o'clock a new order was received by 15 o'clock on 24.6 to concentrate in the area ... with the task, in cooperation with the 8th Panzer and 81st Motorized Rifle Divisions, to destroy the enemy in the Olshin area, Hotynets, Mlyn. The 32nd motorized rifle regiment, by order of the commander of the 4th mechanized corps, was sent to Lvov to the army reserve (that is, Muzychenko finally left the 32nd TD division without motorized infantry). Division, marching through the streets of the mountains. Lvov, met with an oncoming stream of combat and transport vehicles of the 8th mechanized corps (the 8th MK moved east to catch up with German tanks, and the 32nd TD once again returned to the west, to the border). On the streets of the mountains There were street battles with saboteurs in Lvov (a full-scale armed uprising began in the city, and only the absence of anti-tank grenade launchers in the Bandera attics - the Faustpatron would be created three years later - then saved two Soviet tank divisions from complete destruction by "saboteurs"). With great difficulty, overcoming traffic jams, the division concentrated in the area by 02:00 on 25/6/41...

25.6.41 At 10 o'clock the division received an order from the commander of the 4th mechanized corps, according to which the division was to

to develop the strike of the 6th Rifle Corps in its offensive, but the headquarters of the 6th Rifle Corps set an independent task for the tank division - to attack in the direction of a heavily fortified anti-tank area with a river and swampy terrain, without supporting the actions of the division with either infantry or artillery ...

On June 26, 1941, at 4 o'clock, the division received an order from the commander of the 4th mechanized corps to go to the Grudek Jagielonski, Sudova Vyshnya area with the task of defeating a column of 300 enemy tanks moving from Moscisk to Lvov. By 18 o'clock the division concentrated in ur. Zamlyne, but there were no enemy tanks in this area (in the area of operations of the 6th Army, at the tip of the "Lviv ledge", there were no German tank units at all. - M.S.) The division made an 85-kilometer march during the day. At 5 p.m., an order was received to concentrate the division in the Obroshin area and be ready for action on Lyuben Velki.

On June 27, 1941, by 07:00, the division concentrated in the area of Konopnitsa Zastava, Obroshin, with the task of destroying the enemy in the direction of Lyuben Velki. The division made a 40-kilometer march at night ... According to the headquarters of the corps, an enemy grouping was established in the area of \u200b\u200bLuben Velki, but practically this grouping was not found ...),

the division, judging by the report of its commander, "during the first three days of 23-25.6 made a total of 350-kilometer march, without having a normal rest for the crews and the restoration of the materiel. Marches were made both during the day and at night. The conduct of the marches is satisfactory, despite the insufficiently trained drivers. During this period, the division did not conduct combat operations due to the absence of the enemy in these areas.

Then began a non-stop retreat. The operational report of the headquarters of the 6th Army No. 6 of June

27 reads: "... the 4th mechanized corps, having made a night march from the Sudovaya Cherry region, from 6 o'clock began to concentrate in the forest area north of Obroshyn (withdrawal 40 km to the suburbs of Lvov) ... before on 26.6.41, the front of the corps was operated by enemy units up to a ba

No enemy was found in the Mościska area. The corps did not accept the battle. (70,

p. 156) The infantry, with the battalion of which the 4th MK fought on June 26, was not simple, but mountainous (1st and 4th mountain rifle divisions). This means that it was not armed with heavy guns of 105 mm and 150 mm caliber, which, at least theoretically, could use ordinary Wehrmacht infantry divisions to fight against KB and T-34. The standard German 37-mm anti-tank gun was practically useless in combat with the new Soviet tanks. This is confirmed by reports from both sides of the front. The commander of the 32nd TD writes in his report: "The armor of our tanks cannot be penetrated by German 37-mm cannons; there were cases when the KV tank had up to 100 hits, but the armor was not pierced. And here is how the battles on the western approaches to Lvov are described in the history of the 1st mountain rifle division of the

Wehrmacht: "... in the early morning of June 25, Russian tanks one by one appear on the edge of the forest near the village of Yazuv Stary ... Our 3.7-cm anti-tank the gun calmly waits for the tanks to approach at a distance sufficient for firing. When the distance is reduced to 600 m, the gun opens fire. Almost every shot is on target. Fire traces of shells are clearly visible. However, later we stop believing our eyes: our anti-tank shells just bounce off the tanks. Without stopping, enemy tanks continue to approach us, firing from all guns. Then something unexpected happens: having recovered from the fright of the steel colossi, our infantrymen begin to attack, throwing hand grenades at the vehicles. In the 2nd platoon of the 13th company of the 98th regiment is our world skiing champion Bauer, who, having jumped on one of the T-34s, pushes a grenade into its muzzle. One by one, the enemy tanks are put out of action - the fighters must be given credit for their incredible courage and determination .. " (33, p. 162)

Even the newest (for the summer of 1941) German 50-mm anti-tank gun turned out to be of little use in combat against tanks of the 4th mechanized corps. In the description of the hostilities of the 4th mountain rifle division of the Wehrmacht we read:

"The advance group went to the Grudek Jagielonski-Lvov highway. In the area of the village of Kaltwasser, the group met tanks

enemy. The shells of 3.7 cm and 5 cm anti-tank guns were unable to penetrate their armor. Courageous gunners continued to fire from 5-cm guns even when the tanks were already 5 meters away from them. Tanks moved guns. The material losses were enormous..” (33, p. 209) A. Isaev, from whose book these passages were quoted,

accompanies the first of the following comments: “This description shows one of the answers to the question “Where did the Soviet tanks go?”... There is nothing surprising in the fact that the personnel of the 1st Mountain Rifle Division did not rush to flee when T-34 tanks appeared, but resolutely attacked them in close combat, taking advantage of the absence of infantry accompanying the tanks. Indeed, what is so surprising? I saw a tank whose armor was not pierced by an anti-tank gun, ran up, jumped in, put it in ... Well, and the answer to the question “Why haven't the German tanks gone anywhere?” obvious: their muzzles were narrow, caliber 20-37 - 50 mm, you can't put any grenade into such a muzzle ...

In search of other answers to the question "Where did the Soviet tanks go?" Let us turn again to the report of the commander of the 32nd TD. Summing up the losses suffered by the division during the battles with the German infantry from 23 to 29 June, gives a figure of 23 tanks. Another 11 tanks lost two tank battalions, which on the evening of June 22 were advanced to the Radekhov area, where on the afternoon of June 23 there was a battle with units of the 11th German Panzer Division. **A total of 34 tanks.** After these battles, a multi-day march to the east began, and with each passing day the pace of retreat continuously increased: on June 29, the 4th MK left Lvov, on July 3, the corps was already in Zbarazh (135 km east of Lvov), the morning of July 9 found the 4th MK near the town of Ivanopol (180 km from Zbarazh). Finally, on July 12, the remnants of the 4th MK passed along the Kyiv bridges across the Dnieper and concentrated in the Priluki area (120 km and east of the Dnieper, 650 km from the border). During this swift “drang nah Osten”, the 32nd TD had numerous skirmishes with the advanced detachments of the German motorized units pursuing it. The specific number of losses in these skirmishes was named in the report of Colonel Pushkin only once: “... 10.7.41, the group of tanks of Captain Karpov (10 tanks and 2 armored vehicles) concentrated in the Beizymovka area and at 20 o'clock attacked the enemy in the direction of Olshank

infantry, withdrew at 23:00 and took up defensive positions 300–400 m south of Olshanka. During the next day, the group fought an unbearable battle in the same area and, as a result of the flight from the front of the 32nd motorized rifle regiment, was destroyed and left on the battlefield, with the exception of one

tank ... "(63, p. 185) So, 43 tanks " by name » lost in battle. It can be assumed that some figure comparable to the one named was not reflected in the description of the division's combat operations.

However, in the "Summary Statement of Materiel" attached to the report, there are completely different loss figures: **37 KV, 146 T-34, 28 BT-7, 58 T-26. Total: 269 tanks** (not counting T-37 tankettes).

However, these figures of phenomenal losses of impenetrable tanks do not coincide with the cash balance. Simple arithmetic shows that even after the loss of 37 KV, 12 more such tanks should have remained in the 32nd tank division. But in the report signed on July 15, 1941 by the head of the ABTU of the South-Western Front, "On the state and availability of the material part of the mechanized corps of the front," we read: "*The 4th mechanized corps has begun to withdraw its units to the Priluki area. The presence of the material part of the 4th mechanized corps: KV - 6, T-34 - 39, BT - 23, a total of 68 tanks.* (70, p. 89) 6 KV tanks (out of the original number of 99) remained in the entire corps, and not in the 32nd TD alone. True, two days later, on July 17, the same Major General Morgunov signed the following report, from which it follows that a slightly larger number of tanks were found in the 4th MK, which had retreated beyond the Dnieper: "KV - 10 pieces, T-34 - 49 pieces, BT-7 - 23 pieces, T-26 - 18 pieces. (70, p. 90) 10,

of course, more than 6, but still not 12 ... The fact that most of the losses of tanks were not related to the enemy's influence is also evidenced by the ratio of losses of personnel and military equipment. So, according to the report of the commander of the 32nd TD, the 63rd tank regiment of this division in the period from June 22 to July 30, 1941 lost 17 people killed and 63 wounded. At the same time, 14 KVs (out of 18), 61 T-34s (out of 71), 42 T-26s (out of 42), 19 T-37s (out of 19) were lost. 9 BA (out of 10), and a total of 145 armored vehicles.

(63, p. 190) To understand the meaning of these figures, it should be

recalled that the personnel of a tank regiment does not consist of tank crews alone.

number of losses. In the 64th tank regiment of the 32nd TD, 47 people were killed and 64 were wounded. At the same time, 154 units of armored vehicles were lost (23 KV, 85 T-34, 5 BT-7, 16 T-26, 19 T-37, 6 BA). In general, the 32nd Panzer Division lost 139 killed and 356 wounded during the entire period of the fighting in June-July 1941. Probably, this can be called "little blood", but that's just this strange war was not on someone else's, but on their own land ...

Unlike the "newborn" 32nd Panzer Division, the 8th Panzer Division was almost completely equipped with the "old" personnel division. A notable feature of the 8th TD was the presence of 68 three-tower T-28 tanks in its arsenal. The short-barreled 76-mm cannon in the main turret and two separate machine-gun turrets made this vehicle a formidable opponent for enemy infantry. Thanks to the wide tracks, the T-28 had a lower ground pressure (0.72 versus 1.03) and, therefore, better maneuverability than its German competitor Pz-IV. However, the main weapons of the division were not exotic three-tower tanks, but 50 KV and 140 T-34s. In terms of the number of new tanks (190 units), the 8th TD alone surpassed the four mechanized corps of the Leningrad and Baltic districts combined. And here is how N.K. Popel describes the commander of the 8th Panzer Division: *"I look at him and admire - nature spared nothing for this man: neither beauty, nor intelligence, nor courage, nor charm ... Red Army soldiers tell legends about his exploits in Spain and Finland. Fotchenkov already has four orders. Commanders on the fly catch his every word."* Colonel Pyotr Semyonovich Fotchenkov died in August 1941 in the "Uman cauldron". By that time, there were practically no divisions as a tank formation. In the first two days of the war, the 8th TD, like the 32nd TD, rushed to the front in the Yavorov-Nemirov region. On the morning of June 24, an order was received from the front commander demanding that the 8th Panzer Division be placed at the

disposal of the commander of the 15th MK, General Carpezo. The commander of the 6th Army, Muzychenko, duplicated this order, but "in parting" tore off the motorized rifle regiment from the 8th TD, which on June 25 received an order to take up defense along the Grudek-Lviv highway together with the 445th artillery regiment of the RGK. In fact, the 8th TD reached the Radekhov-Lopatyn area (60 km from Lvov) only by the morning of June 28th. By this time, from all

the division was left with one consolidated tank regiment, which was armed with **only 65 tanks!** The report on the combat operations of the 15th MK noted that *"thanks to the active actions of the 8th tank division, the left flank of the corps was secured from the west and the 10th and 37th tank divisions were able to retreat to the line of the river.*

Radostavka". This is not a typo. The result of the "active actions" of the tank division in the offensive is that the other two tank divisions were able to safely retreat with its help, pursued by the enemy infantry. Although this achievement is by no means indisputable. So, in the report on the hostilities of the 10th TD we read something exactly the opposite: *"The division's withdrawal routes were cut off by enemy tanks and infantry, since the 8th TD (the neighbor on the left), which had the task of covering the division's actions from the west, could not move through heavily fortified anti-tank area.* Strange. The sixth day of the war - and the Germans in the depths of Soviet territory already have an anti-tank area ready, and even "heavily fortified" at the same time ...

During the battle on June 28, the 8th Panzer Division lost 12 tanks, another 19 T-34s were lost on June 24 in battles with enemy infantry in the Nemirov area. Where are the remaining 294 tanks of one of the most powerful tank divisions of the Red Army? The report compiled by the commander of the 8th TD contains a detailed and detailed answer to this question. Outstanding is the courage of the drafters of the document, who bluntly use the term "abandoned". For convenience, let's summarize all the report data in a table: (33, p. 246)

	КВ	T-34	T-28	BT-7	T-26	Всего
Исходное кол-во на 22.06.1941 г	50	140	68	31	36	325
Подбито	13	54	10	2	6	85
Брошены, пропали без вести, завязли в болотах, прочие	27	51	27	15	15	135
Отправлены на завод, отработали моточасы	8	32	0	3	5	48
Арифметический остаток	2	3	31	11	10	57

So, the main component of tank losses in one of the best divisions of the Red Army was: "abandoned" (107 tanks), "missing" (10 tanks), "stuck in a swamp" (6 tanks). 12 tanks including 10

the newest T-34s, disappeared to no one knows where ("other"). There is no answer to the question of where the arithmetic remainder of 31 T-28 tanks has gone (tanks of this type are no longer in the ABTU reports of the front on July 15–17). By the standards of the impoverished Wehrmacht, this amount (31 T-28 tanks) should have been enough to equip one tank division with "heavy tanks" (in the 1st Wehrmacht TGr there were only 20 Pz-IVs per division, in a record number of Pz-IVs 18th TD of the 2nd Panzer Group - 36). Yes, and the remainder of 57 tanks exists, alas, only arithmetically - on July 7, by the beginning of the battles for Berdichev, only 32 tanks were listed in the 8th TD ... Against the background of such "order in tank units" one has to think about the reliability of information about 54 wrecked for two weeks of T-34 battles, practically invulnerable to the 37-mm anti-tank guns of the German infantry divisions. This figure (54 out of 140 T-34s knocked out) looks very strange against the background of **much smaller** (both in absolute and relative terms) numbers of knocked out BT-7s and T-26s with their bulletproof armor...

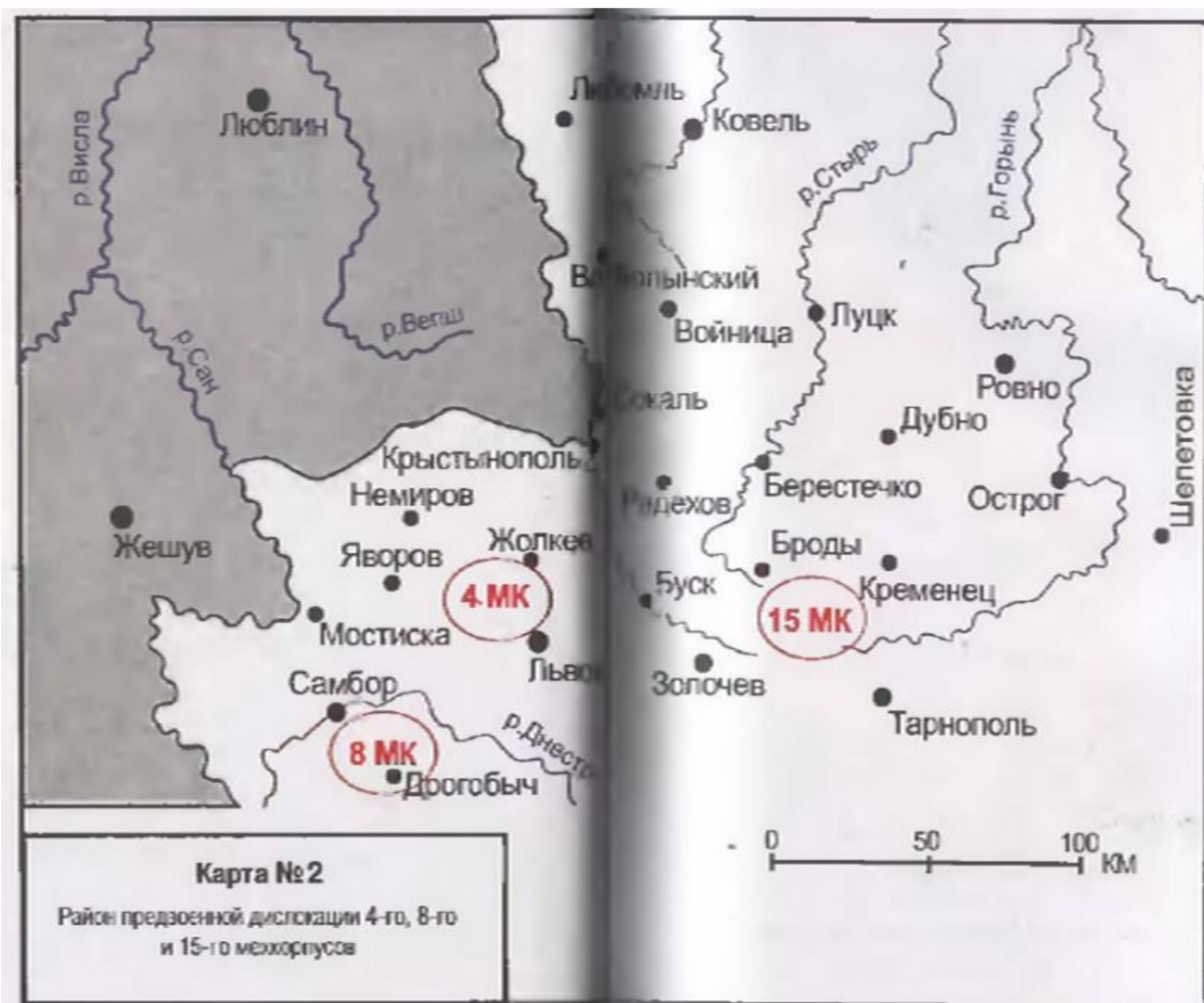
The description of the fighting of the third division of the 4th MK will, unfortunately, not take up much space from us. If the organizational structures and "golden sections" glorified by Mr. Isaev had any real relation to the combat effectiveness of the Red Army divisions of the summer 1941 model, then the 81st motorized division should have reached at least Lublin. The division was not "overloaded with tanks" (one tank for two motorized rifle regiments), and after it was given the 441st corps artillery regiment, armed with powerful 152-mm ML-20 howitzer-guns, the 81st motorized and, with the help of artillery fire surpassed any German tank division. Well, in terms of the number of tanks (270 high-speed BTs), from the very beginning it surpassed the largest German 7th Panzer Division on the entire Eastern Front (265 tanks). Alas, the "sword-hoarder" from such a "correctly structured" 81st motorized division did not work out. On June 24, three regiments (tank, artillery and 323rd motorized rifle) of the division were surrounded by German infantry in the Nemirov area. It is not entirely clear how the infantry can "surround" a tank regiment, but by the evening the rout was completed. All heavy equipment was lost, most of the personnel went missing, the commander of the 323rd SME was killed, the division commander, Colonel Varypaev, the deputy division commander, Colonel Barabanov, and the division chief of staff, Colonel, were missing.

Spesivtsev, chiefs of the operational and intelligence department of the division headquarters, chief of artillery of the division, commander of the artillery regiment, chief of staff of the 323rd MSP. (76) Of course, there are no reports and reports on the reasons for the loss of tanks of the 81st motorized rifle division. left.

It is worth noting that for all this General Vlasov (namely, he was the commander of the 4th MK) was not punished. That is, then, of course, they hanged him - but for something completely different. And in the summer of 1941, Vlasov even went on promotion and became the commander of the most powerful 37th Army on the Southwestern Front. When you compare this with the tragic fate of the command of the Western Front, who was shot without exception (the commander of the 14th mechanized corps, S.I. Oborin, who was wounded in battle, was taken directly from the hospital for reprisal), then we have to admit that Comrade

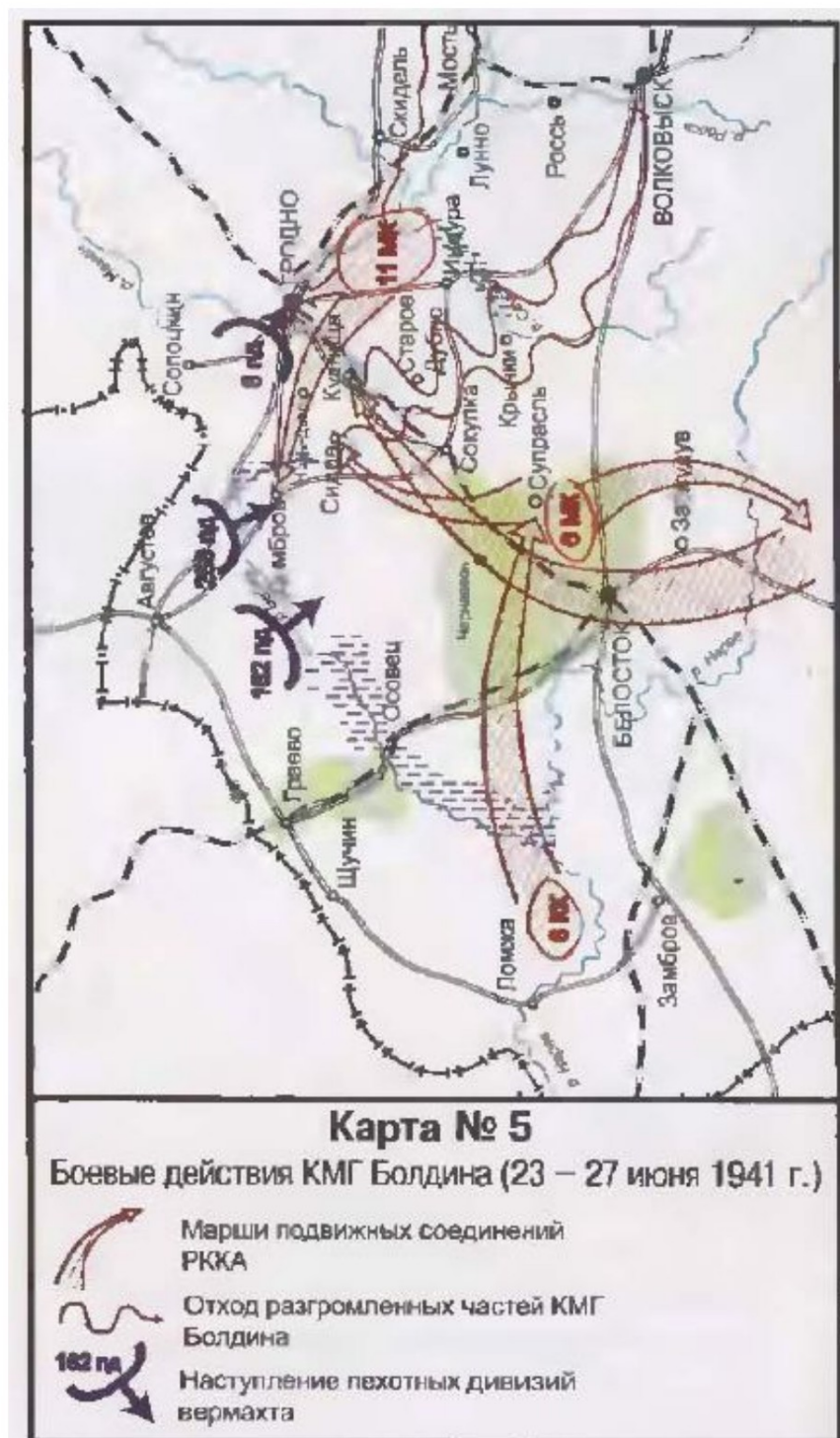
Stalin was a truly great man. No one can understand the logic of his executions and favors ... For lovers of conspiracy theories, we will give a "decoding" of a few more names and positions. The commander of the 6th Army, Muzychenko, surrendered on August 6, 1941 in the "boiler" near Uman, where the remnants of the 6th Army were defeated. The head of the operational department of the headquarters of the 6th Army, Meandrov, surrendered, became one of the founders and leaders of the Vlasov "army", was hanged in 1946. Chief of Staff of the 6th Rifle Corps (the same one that *"set the tank division an independent task - to attack in the direction of a heavily fortified anti-tank area with a river and swampy terrain, without supporting the actions of the division with either infantry or artillery"*) Major General Richter surrendered to captured, actively cooperated with the German special services (according to some reports, he headed the Warsaw reconnaissance and sabotage school of the Abwehr), shot in August 1945. The neighbor on the right is the 27th SC (5th Army). The corps commander, Major General Artyomenko, surrendered, was shot in June 1950, and rehabilitated in June 1957. The neighbor on the left is the 13th SC (12th Army). The corps commander, Major General Kirillov, surrendered, was shot in August 1950, and

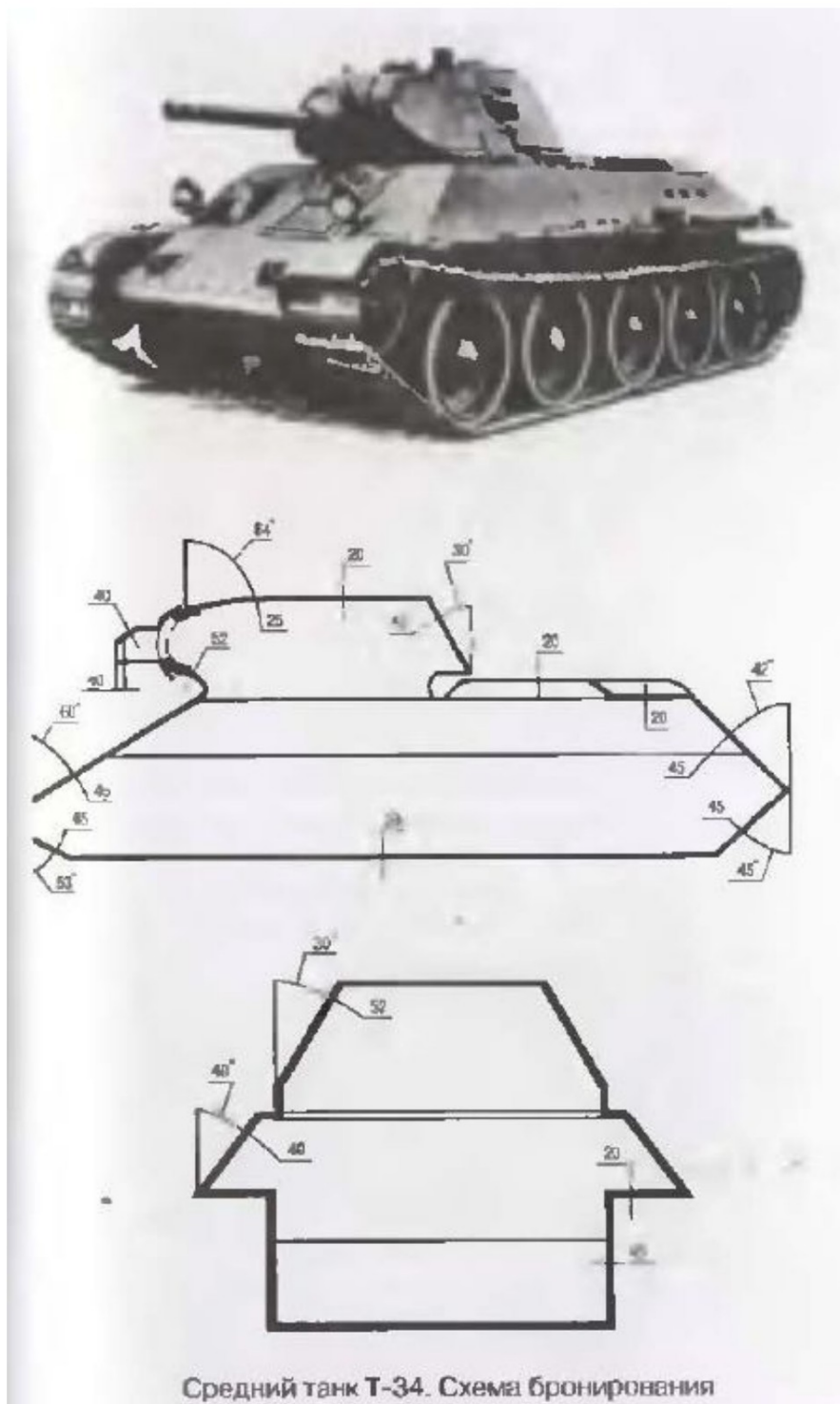




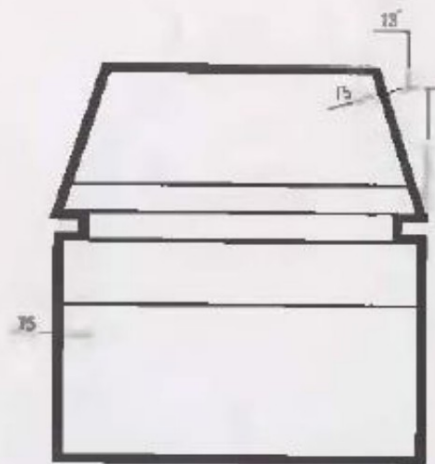
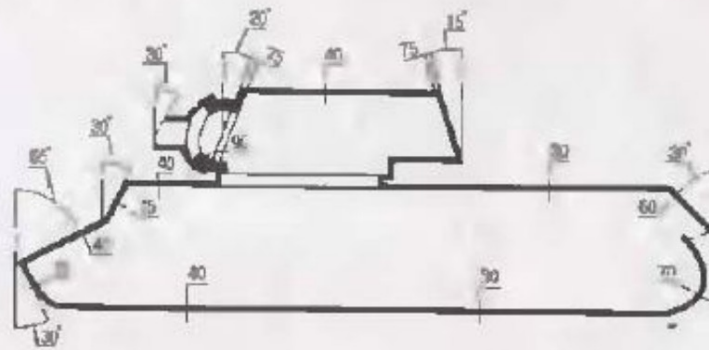








Средний танк Т-34. Схема бронирования



Тяжелый танк КВ. Схема бронирования

Chapter

15 TANK CASE - 2

The 8th mechanized corps was the second most powerful and equipped with the latest equipment on the Southwestern

Front. The number and composition of tanks of the 8th MK (excluding floating tankettes T-37/38) are shown in the following table:

	KB	T-34	T-35	BT-7	1-24	Всего:
12-я тд	61	100	0	147	61	369
34-я тд	8	0	49	26	292	375
7-я мд	0	0	0	115	0	115
Всего:	69	100	49	288	353	859

As you can see, the corps consisted of two unequal parts: the "old" personnel division (12th TD), equipped with the latest tanks and high-speed BT-7, and the new (34th TD) tank division formed in the spring of 1941, armed mainly light and, of course, already outdated T-26. A notable feature of the 34th TD was the presence of completely exotic equipment in its arsenal - five-turreted T-35 heavy tanks. In terms of armament (short-barreled 76-mm gun, two 45-mm 20K tank guns and two machine-gun turrets), one T-35 was equal to a group of five German tanks (one Pz-IV, two Pz-III and two Pz-I), and two battalions of heavy tanks (a total of 48 serviceable T-35s) in general, in terms of the number of tank guns, surpassed any of the tank divisions of the 1st Tank Group of the Wehrmacht. While the 4th MK was rushing about in short dashes in the enchanted triangle Lvov - Yavorov - Nemirov, the 8th MK of General Ryabyshev was

moving towards the combat area in a wide, sweeping zigzag, like a skier in a giant slalom. In the early morning of June 22, the 8th MK, acting according to pre-war plans, went on alert and moved through Sambir to the border river San. On the evening of June 22, at 22:40, a new order was received: by 12:00 on June 23, the corps was to concentrate in the Kurovichi area (25 kilometers east of Lvov). From this initial area, the 8th mechanized corps was to (together with the 15th MK and 4th MK) strike at the flank and rear

the German "tank wedge", which broke through the defenses of the 5th Army in the Lutsk-Radekhov zone. On the night of June 23, the multi-kilometer columns of the 8th mechanized corps moved east, describing a large hook with a length of more than 150 km along the route Sambor - Drohobych - Stryi - Lvov. In the middle of the day on June 23, when the main forces of the tank divisions were located approximately at the turn of the city of Nikolaev (38 km along the highway southwest of Lvov), and the 7th motorized division had already reached the outskirts of Lvov, Muzychenko ordered the 6th mechanized corps to turn and to At 19 o'clock on June 23, concentrate in the forest south of Yavorov (i.e., in the very area where Muzychenko, contrary to the orders of the front command, sent the main forces of the 4th MK). The steel belt of hundreds of tanks, trucks, tractors, armored vehicles turned almost 180 degrees for the second time in the last 24 hours and again moved west, towards the border. Having made a tiring night march, the 8th mechanized corps went to Yavorov, in the defense zone of the 6th Army. There, late in the evening of June 23, the corps commander was handed a package with a new-old order from the front command: again deploy the corps and, by the end of the day on June 24, eventually reach the area of the city of Brody, connect

Almost simultaneously with this, Muzychenko made a last attempt to "save" at least one division from the 8th MK. In accordance with the "Combat order of the commander of the troops of the 6th Army" No. 003 of June 23, 1941, *"The 34th Panzer Division is part of the 6th Army with direct subordination to the Military Council of the Army. The divisions should be ready to strike in the directions of Nemirov, Yavorov, Krakovets. (70, p. 146)* This attempt at arbitrariness was unsuccessful, and the 34th TD remained in the corps. Only by 6 o'clock in the morning on June 26, two tank divisions (12th and 34th) of the 8th mechanized corps reached the area of the city of Brody, the third division of the corps (7th motorized) was at that time still in the area of the city of Buek, lagging 85 km behind the tank divisions. Although the distance from Drohobych to Brod does not exceed 150 km in a straight line, the tank divisions of the corps covered (as is clear from the report of the commander of the 8th MK dated July 18, 1941) 500 km, "leaving on the roads during the marches up to 50% of the presence of combat *material parts.*" (63, p. 166) In such an assessment of the magnitude of "marching losses", a desire to justify oneself for the defeat of the corps is clearly visible (which defeat had already become a fait accompli by the time the report was written). So, in another text, Ryabyshev writes that "in

during a march of almost 500 km, the corps lost up to half of the tanks **of obsolete designs**. Finally, a simple summation of data on losses and the number of KV and T-34 tanks remaining in service allows us to conclude that even after the battles and losses of the first day of the offensive (June 26), the corps had 141 more "new types" tanks, which is 83 % of their original population. Be that as it may, the forced 500-km march could not but lead to a large number of breakdowns, and taking into account the fact that the territory on which the 8th MK rushed for three days and three nights was occupied by the enemy three or four days later, all temporarily out of order tanks moved into the category of "irretrievable losses". A concrete idea

of how this "fall" of the tanks of the 8th Mechanized Corps took place will be given by a document posted on the website of the Mechanized Corps of the Red Army. This is a complete list of all heavy five-turreted T-35 tanks from the 34th Panzer Division, indicating the date, place and reason for the failure of the tank. These unique tanks (certainly obsolete by the summer of 1941) were a combination of very powerful weapons with weak bulletproof armor protection. The German 37 mm anti-tank gun could be guaranteed to penetrate the side armor of this three-meter-high monster. It would seem that it was among tanks of this type that the share of combat losses should have been especially large. In reality, only **6 tanks out of 47** said that the reason for the loss was "knocked out in battle on June 30" (this was the last battle of the 34th tank division near the city of Dubno). Where and how were all the others lost?

One tank "disappeared", two "got bogged down in a swamp", two - "fell into the river from the bridge." The remaining **36 tanks** were lost due to all kinds of technical malfunctions. For example, tank No. 715/62 was abandoned by the crew in Lvov due to a "*fan drive failure*", and this happened on June 29, that is, five days after the 34th TD left the area and went to Brody. Tank No. 744/63 was abandoned on July 1 on the march from Zolochiv to Tarnopol (that is, this tank had never been on the battlefield near Dubno) due to "*jamming of the engine pistons*." Tank No. 234/42 was left in the northern suburbs of Lvov due to "*the main clutch was burned*", but this accident allegedly took place on July 3, i.e., four days after the capture of Lvov by the Germans! In general, history and geography in this report are categorically not

match up. At least 12 tanks have been named as the place where they were lost, the areas from which the division left a few days ago. The main technical malfunction that caused the loss of 22 tanks was the breakdown of the gearbox and transmission ("friction burned out"), which can equally be associated with both wear and tear of equipment and illiterate (or deliberate) actions of the driver. The last two "land battleships" broke down during the retreat on July 9 in the Volochisk area (100 km south of Dubno), and the history of the combat use of the T-35 ended forever. In the Red Army - but not in the Wehrmacht. In April 1945, one captured T-35 took part in the battles for Berlin. Despite its "extreme unreliability" and "hopeless obsolescence", the steel monster crawled to the battlefield, where it was hit. (97) In accordance with the orders of the commander of the Southwestern Front No. 0015 of June 24 and No. 0016 of June 25, the 8th MK went on the offensive at 9 am on June 26 (70, pp. 29, 33). i.e., practically on the move, from

the march, without reconnaissance of the area and the enemy. The front command (after the 8th MK spent four days on pointless forced marches) was now in a hurry. Only haste can explain at least a strange choice of the direction of the blow: from Brod to Berestechko. Even on the road map of Ukraine in 2002, it is impossible to find a single decent road between these cities, while the area is covered with forest with many small streams. And from Brod to Dubno there is a main highway, and it goes through a completely open area - not a single "green" spot on the map. The most important thing is that on the afternoon of June 26, the offensive against Dubno from the northeast was launched by the 43rd Panzer Division of Colonel I. G. Tsibin. The 19th mechanized corps, which included the Tsibin division, was among the "reduced first stage", and the planned completion date for its formation was set for the end of 1942. Despite the fact that the 43rd TD had the number of "new types" tanks there were fewer than fingers on one hand, and there were no armor-piercing 76-mm shells at all, the division successfully smashed and drove the enemy:

"At 14.00 on June 26, the tanks of the division launched an attack, having two KV tanks and two T-34 tanks in front, turned around on the move and upset the anti-tank system and the battle formation of enemy infantry with hurricane fire,

which began to retreat westward in disarray. Pursuing the enemy infantry, our tanks were met by fire from enemy tanks from ambush and from a place, but the KV and T-34 tanks that had burst forward were attacked, and after them - by T-26 tanks ... The enemy tanks, unable to withstand the fire and the rapid tank attacks, began to retreat, lingering on the flanks, but were quickly knocked out by our tanks, maneuvering on the battlefield. Tanks KV and T-34 (four pieces. - M.S.) , not having enough armor-piercing shells, fired with fragmentation shells and with their mass crushed and destroyed enemy tanks and anti-tank guns ... The enemy, retreating to Dubno, blew up behind him bridges, thus depriving the division of the opportunity to break through to Dubno on the shoulders of the retreating infantry ... " (63, p. 238)

Perhaps less accurately, but much more clearly, the commander of the reconnaissance battalion of the 43rd TD V. S. Arkhipov (who entered the war already with the rank of Hero of the Soviet Union and ended it twice as a Hero) describes this day much more clearly . *On June*

26, we drove the Nazis to Dubno, this was no longer a retreat, but a real flight. Parts of the German 11th Panzer Division mixed up, panic seized them. It also affected the fact that, in addition to hundreds of prisoners, we captured many tanks and armored personnel carriers and about 100 motorcycles abandoned by the crews in good condition ... The prisoners, as a rule, were in a hurry to declare that they did not belong to the National Socialists, and very willingly testified. I had a chance to observe a similar psychological state of the Nazi troops, depression and panic again very, very not soon - only after Stalingrad and the Battle of Kursk ... " (77)

At the time when the 43rd Panzer Division (whose commander did not have the slightest information about the actions of the 8th MK and 15th MK) went to the northern suburbs of Dubno, a steel avalanche of tanks of the 8th mechanized corps (whose commander only on June 27 found out about combat operations of the 19th MK) rushed through the swampy forest to Berestechko. Estimates of the success of this offensive vary greatly in different sources. The most derogatory assessment is given in the operational summary of the headquarters of Yu Z.f. No. 09 (20.00 June 26, 1941):

"... the 8th mechanized corps at 9.00 on 26.6.41 hesitantly attacked the mechanized units of the enemy from the Brody area to

in the direction of Berestechko and, not having sufficient support from aviation and from the side of the neighbor on the left - the 15th mechanized corps, was stopped by the enemy towards the starting area for the attack ... "(70, p. 34) In the report of the commander of the 8th mechanized

corps (dated July 18, 1941 .) it is said more streamlined: "... The corps attacked the defending units of the 16th armored division of the enemy in the ~~general~~ ^{generalized} direction of Brody, Berestechko, but, having met the resistance of the enemy, who covered himself with a swampy river impassable for tanks and destroyed all crossings across this river, he could not develop the pace of the

offensive ... " (63, p. 166) In his post-war memoirs, General

Ryabyshev writes: "... In the morning the offensive began. But it didn't develop as expected. The 12th Panzer Division was unable to break through the enemy's defenses on the move ... However, the motorized riflemen of the 12th Panzer Division, Major General of the Tank Forces T. A. Mishanin, with the support of artillery, nevertheless overcame the swampy area, crossed the Slonovka River, captured the destroyed bridge and bridgehead on the opposite shore ... By 16 o'clock in a fierce battle, the village of Leshnev was captured ... Formations and units of the 48th mechanized corps of the enemy, suffering heavy losses, under the onslaught of units of the 12th and 34th tank divisions, retreated to the right bank of the Plyashevka River and went on the defensive Thus, on June 26, the corps advanced 8-10 km in the direction of Berestechko and by the evening, having met strong enemy resistance, was forced to go on the defensive and repel enemy attacks ... Sending a report on the successful actions of the corps to the front headquarters, I believed that the commander will decide to build on the success of

the corps, defeat the enemy and push him back to the border ... " (78)

The reader has probably already guessed why we analyze in such detail, in fact, the private question of whether the 8th MK advanced 10 km forward or was "stopped by the enemy in the starting area for the attack."

The day of June 26 was the first, only and last day when the 8th MK participated in the counterattack of the Soviet troops as a whole. At 2:30 a.m. On the night of June 27, Ryabyshev received an order from the commander of the Southwestern Front: "The 8th mechanized corps to

retreat beyond the line Nechaev, Podkamen, Zolochiv (25–50 km southeast of Brod. -

In the case of the 6th MK of the Western Front, the offensive of the mechanized corps that had begun was stopped by order of the higher command. Just as on the Western Front, the order to withdraw actually became the impetus for the beginning of the disintegration of the unit. By the morning of June 27, the situation in the 12th TD division, as can be judged from Popel's memoirs, was *as follows: "Mishanin's division left the front line ... On the way, they ran into Mishanin fighters several times. They wander anyhow. The commanders are not visible ... "*

Decomposition in the division reached the point that the commander of the 12th TD, General Mishanin, who was heavily shell-shocked during the bombing, was simply dragged into an abandoned

tank and left alone in Brody, under the supervision "of the same shell-shocked orderly. (58) At 6 a.m. on June 27, the 8th mechanized corps received a new (second in the last 4 hours) order of the commander of the South-Western Front No. 2121 of 27.6.41. by the end of the day *"concentrate in the area of Dubno, Volkovye, m.*

Verba." (63, p. 167) It was possible to concentrate in Dubno only by taking this city in battle. And although this time the direction of the strike was reasonable (a highway runs from Brod to Dubno, parallel to it is an embankment of the railway, the area is open, suitable for the advance of tanks), the distance from Brod to Dubno is 62 km along the highway, and hardly such a task day was real for the mechanized corps, parts of which, as a result of leapfrog orders from the front command, were scattered for tens of kilometers. The 12th TD surprisingly quickly carried out the nightly withdrawal order, as a result of which *"during 27.6.41 they were in the Podkamen area, where they put themselves in order and by the end of the day concentrated in the forests northeast of Brody."* An attempt to fulfill order No. 2121 led to

the fact that the corps was torn (as it became clear a few days later - torn forever) into two parts. A group of troops under the command of corps commissar Popel, which included the 34th TD, reinforced by 40 KV and T-34 tanks from the 12th TD (a total of 217 tanks and up to 9 thousand personnel), moved along the highway to Dubno. The rest of the formations of the corps (12th TD, 7th motorized division, corps units) under the command of Ryabyshev concentrated during the day on June 27 in

Popel's group with fighting reached the suburbs of Dubno (the village of Malye Sady on the southern outskirts of the city), thereby cutting

the main communications through which the supply of the 1st Tank Group of the Wehrmacht was going. However, judging by the reports of the headquarters of the South-Western Front to the General Staff of the Red Army, *"according to the data at 14.00 on 28.6.41, the 8th mechanized corps occupies Dubno."* (70, p. 44) The fact that the tankers of the 8th mechanized corps took the city of Dubno itself is also written in his memoirs by Popel. Be that as it may, the German command appreciated the threat and pulled up part of the forces of the 16th Panzer and 16th Motorized Divisions, as well as parts of four infantry divisions (111, 44, 57, 75) to the Brody-Dubno area. In parentheses, we note that the very **fact of the appearance of German infantry** 120 km from the border already on the fifth - sixth day of the war clearly indicates what the "fierce resistance" of the Soviet troops actually was. For infantry on foot, 20 km a day is the pace of the march, and the march is forced. So, in October 1939, it was precisely in these places, on the territory of occupied eastern Poland, that the schedule for the movement of marching columns was established in order to withdraw German and Soviet troops to the agreed line of the new border - 20 km per day (1, p. 130). There would simply be no time for the German infantry to fight at such a pace of advance ...

The Popel group, surrounded in the Dubno region, was actually abandoned to its fate. Two rifle divisions (140th and 146th) were located at a distance of 10 km from Dubno, but, contrary to the order of the commander No. 018 of June 28, they did not provide any support to the Popel group. Interaction with the 19th MK, 9th MK, 22nd MK, who were fighting a few tens of kilometers north of Dubno, was never organized. For four days (from June 27 to June 30), the Popel group received no information from the front command, no help, no instructions on how to get out of the encirclement. Late in the evening of June 30, rear units, a medical battalion, "horseless" tankers, under the cover of a group of 60 tanks, broke through the encirclement and a few days later, on the Ternopil-Proskurov (Khmelnitsky) highway, they connected with the remnants of the 8th MK retreating to the east. The main forces of Popel's group (which by this moment had been reduced to 80 tanks and several artillery batteries) fought a tense battle until the end of the day on July 1. In the battles for Dubno, the commander of the 34th TD, Colonel I.V. Vasiliev, died, the political officer of the div

M. M. Nemtsev and the commander of the 24th Tank Regiment (12th Tank Division), Lieutenant Colonel P.I. Volkov, died, went missing, thousands of soldiers and commanders were captured by the Germans. The survivors (about one thousand people) under the command of Popel, joining groups of encirclement from other units, fought 250 kilometers along the huge Dubno-Slavuta-Korosten arc and at the end of July 1941 united with the troops of the 5th Army in Belokorovich area. The main forces

of the 8th mechanized corps, despite the presence of a powerful tank ram (except for two hundred light tanks, there were still about 46 KV and 49 T-34s in the 12th TD), to break through the barrier of the 16th tank, 57th and 75th th infantry German divisions could not.

Although in these battles, the technical superiority of the new Soviet tanks was manifested with merciless clarity. So, on June 28, a large group of German tanks broke through to the command post of Mishanin's 12th Panzer Division. *"I watched," Ryabyshev writes in his memoirs, "how fascist tanks with black crosses rushed between our huge KVs, looking for salvation. They tried to maneuver in order to be able to shoot at the weak side armor. But this did not help either: the KV and T-34 dexterously shot enemy tanks from their 76-mm cannons ... Thus, 6 KV and 4 T-34s destroyed all 40 German tanks, but they themselves did not suffer losses.*

On the evening of June 28, the German infantry went to the rear of the 8th MK, cutting off the escape route along the highway to Brody. The panic started again. General Mishanin died, on foot raising the fighters to attack. In his official report on the combat operations of the corps, Ryabyshev briefly writes: "Parts of the 7th motorized rifle division broke through from the encirclement in different directions. Having lost a large number of tanks, artillery and vehicles, by 24.00 on 28.6.41 the division left the encirclement and concentrated southeast of Brody. (63, p. 169) Popel's memoirs give a much more vivid picture of what was hidden behind the mean phrase "they broke through from the encirclement in different directions":

"... Ryabyshev sat on the emka and rushed to Brody. On the way, he stumbled upon fighters wandering in crowds, burning cars, wounded lying in cuvettes. No one occupied the line intended for the 12th Panzer Division ... Some restless Red Army soldiers said that the motorized infantry had rolled south, apparently towards Ternopil. Comcor

turned onto the southern highway and about twenty kilometers overtook the tail of the sprawling column. Nobody knew anything. Ryabyshev tried to stop the cars. From the cockpit of a lorry, a sleepy voice calmly said: "What

other commander is there?" Our general is a traitor. Leaked to the Nazis. Ryabyshev

pulled the cockpit handle, grabbed the speaker by the belt (ordinary fighters ride without a harness. - M.S.), dragged out. -

I'm your

commander. Without putting his pistol in his holster, Ryabyshev moved along the column, stopping companies, battalions, ordering them to take up defense with the front to the north-west ... Nervousness and uncertainty reigned at the front headquarters, where the commander was called. In the hustle and bustle of the general rush, inconsistent orders were issued on the move, which were often canceled after ten minutes. In pursuit of the first communications officer, the second

rushed ... The front headquarters retreated to Proskurov ... " (58)

Now, from the tragic story of the death of the 8th mechanized corps, let's return to simple arithmetic. Losses on the first day of the offensive (June 26) were negligible (in comparison with the initial number of tanks in the 8th MK) small. In the report of the corps commander, the following figures are given: *"in the 12th TD, 8 tanks were hit in battle, 2 tanks were loaded in a swamp ... The 34th TD lost 5 tanks, of which 4 tanks were hit by the enemy and 1 tank burned down."* (63, p. 167) Incomparably large (86 tanks) were the losses of the 12th TD and 7th MD, suffered during unsuccessful battles and a panicked retreat to Ternopil on June 28–30. However, even after such losses, the 8th MK in terms of the number of tanks remaining in service (207 units) surpassed any tank division from the 1st Tank Group of the Wehrmacht *"By July 1, 1941 in the 8th mechanized corps, which now consisted of the 12th tank and 7th motorized divisions, there were more than 19 thousand soldiers and commanders, 207 tanks,*

*including 43 KV, 31 T-34, 69 BT-7, 57 T-26, 7 T-40, as well as 21 armored vehicles . Subsequently, our **corps withdrew from the hostilities** (emphasized by me. - M.S.), marched to the Nizhyn region*

(100 km east of Kiev), where from July 14 (from July 8, judging by the report of the head

front ... " (78, 70) It was during this non-stop retreat to the east that the tanks of the 8th mechanized corps finally disappeared.

12-я тд + 7-я мд	КВ + Т-34	БТ-7 + Т-26	Т-37/38/40	Всего
На 22 июня 1941 г	161	323	46	530
Потери в бою 26 июня	?	?	?	10
Передано в группу Попеля 27 июня	40	6		46
Общие боевые потери за 26- 30 июня	21	75	0	96
Арифметический остаток на 1 июля	100	242	46	388
Фактический ос- таток на 1 июля	74	126	7	207
Фактический ос- таток на 17 июля	28	29	0	57

The arithmetic differs from the actual balance of tanks in two divisions of the 8th mechanized corps (12th TD and 7th MD) **by 331 units**. This is if you do not take into account the fact that about 60 tanks from the Popel group left the encirclement and connected with the main forces of the 8th MK. One and a half hundred tanks (including 29 KV and 17 T-34s) disappeared after July 1, that is, **after the actual completion of the corps' hostilities**. In total, in the period from June 22 to July 17, it is not known where 72 of the newest KV and T-34 tanks disappeared. The very ones who (according to Ryabyshev's story) destroyed 40 German tanks in ten men without a single loss of their own. In general, non-combat losses of tanks account for **three-quarters (331 out of 427)** of the total number of losses. And this is if it is naive to consider all the losses (86 tanks) of the devastating day on June 28 as "combat" ...

The history of the defeat of **the 15th mechanized corps** is better documented than others - we have at our disposal three reports on military operations (both the corps as a whole and each of its tank divisions). (70, pp. 196, 63, pp. 193, p. 217) Unfortunately, the apparent abundance of information does not at all contribute to clarifying the situation. Rather, on the contrary - figures and facts (if only these are "facts", and not

retrospectively invented "good reasons" for the defeat of the most powerful tank formation) contradict both each other and elementary common sense. Not to mention the fact that the number of tanks in the divisions of the corps in various documents varies by dozens of units - although, it would seem, the compilers of reports and reports did not consider candy wrappers, but military equipment that was extremely expensive and "scarce" in the war. According to the available documents, it is impossible, at least in general terms, to clarify the unfortunate question of the staffing of the 15th mechanized corps with vehicles and artillery mechanized traction equipment. Again, we are not talking about a "miracle" common to the entire Red Army, as a result of which, in the presence of a huge amount of motor vehicles (even BEFORE the announcement of open mobilization, on average, each of the 303 Soviet divisions - including the rifle division formed in remote places of Siberia - accounted for 900 vehicles **and 112 caterpillar tractors** and tractors), the mechanized corps of the first echelon of the troops of the border districts were without the regular number of tractors, trucks and tankers. The specific figures in the reports of the commanders of the same unit strikingly do not match. In total, the 15th MK on June 10, 1941 (that is, even before the start of the war and the mobilization of equipment from the national economy) had 2,035 vehicles (of all types and purposes), 50 artillery tractors (Voroshilovets, Komintern) , ÿ-2) and 115 tractors. (79) According to the report of the acting commander of the 10th TD, by the beginning of hostilities in the division there were (in total, taking into account faulty equipment) 962 vehicles and 30 tractors. A question for a second-grader: how many cars and tractors are left "to share" with the other two divisions of

the corps? We open the report of the acting commander of the 15th MK and read: "... *the 212th motorized division, having an almost complete supply of personnel for the Red Army, **did not have at all** (emphasized by me. - M.S.) vehicles for transporting personnel and could not even provide themselves by vehicles for the transport of ammunition, food and fuel and lubricants, as well as for the transport of weapons. The artillery regiment had 8 - 76-mm guns, 16 - 122-mm guns and 4 - 152-mm guns, and there **were only traction tools for one division, and then without rears ... The anti-tank division of the 212th MD***

Where are 1073 more cars, 20 specialized tractors and 115 tractors "walking"? Maybe they all ended up in the second tank division of the corps? *"The motorized rifle regiment of the 37th tank division was 160 km from the division (???) and **had no means of transportation**. The artillery regiment of the 37th TD consisted **of 12** 122-mm guns without panoramas (???), 4 152-mm guns and **a total of 5 tractors ...** "*

According to the report of the acting corps commander, the artillery regiment of the 37th TD had 12 122 mm howitzers and 4 152 mm howitzers by the start of hostilities. In the report of the commander of the 37th TD, the number of artillery weapons of the division is expressed as a percentage. It can be assumed - as a percentage of the staffing. Specifically: *"122-mm howitzers - 56%, 152-mm howitzers - 33.3%."* 33% of the regular number of 152-mm howitzers is, in simple terms, 4 guns. A figure coinciding with the report of the Acting Commander. But 56% of the regular number of 122-mm howitzers is 6.72 howitzers. It doesn't match anything anymore. In particular, it does not coincide with the further text of the report of the commander of the 37th TD, from which report it follows that 4 122-mm howitzers were launched on the campaign, and another 21 122-mm howitzers were left at the place of permanent deployment of the division. Total - 25 guns out of incomprehensible available...

Of course, these are all petty quibbles. The number "21" is most likely a typo. But is it possible to consider such facts as insignificant "trifle" (again, if these "facts" took place):

"... The regimental artillery was sent to the regiments almost all out of order ... The personnel of the corps motorcycle regiment never fired ... The division did not receive assigned vehicles from the national economy. 8 representatives were sent to the reception point for assigned vehicles Shepetovka, but after staying there for several days, they returned without a single vehicle, saying that the vehicles intended for our division had departed for one of the fortified areas (vehicles intended for the MECHANIZED connection had departed in a fortified area that is FIXED by definition?) ... For the entire period of the fighting, the division could not get a single shell for 37-mm anti-aircraft guns from anywhere ... They did not have air reconnaissance data until 25.6.41 and later too ... There was no support for the division from our aviation during the entire period of hostilities ... "

As was customary then, there were no armor-piercing shells in one of the most powerful mechanized corps of the Red Army. Or almost none. It's hard to say exactly. In the report of the commander of the 10th Panzer Division (63 KV tanks and 38 T-34s), we read: "For the *first three days of fighting, the division did not have a single armor-piercing projectile for 76-mm guns.*" In the report of the corps commander, the same thing is said somewhat differently: "*For the first 3 days of fighting there were no armor-piercing shells (in the 19th and 20th tank regiments of the 10th TD there were only 96 armor-piercing shells per regiment).*" There were really few armor-piercing shells of 76 mm caliber in the Red Army. But not to the same extent. As of May 1, 1941, on average, one 76-mm gun in the Kiev OVO had 18 armor-piercing shells. (9, p. 261 "On average. In accordance with the Directive of the chief of staff of the district No. 9 0054 of April 29, 1941, the available modest stock had

to be distributed wisely, namely: (75, p. 23)" ... *Armor-piercing provide parts of the district with shots according to the following calculation: - for each 76-mm cannon of rifle divisions, 6 shots; - cavalry, motorized rifle divisions and parts of fortified areas, 12 shots each ... - for each 76-mm cannon on KV tanks, 25 shots*
(underlined by **me** . - M.S.) - **on T-34**

tanks, 13 shots each ... "One or two dozen armor-piercing shells in the tank's ammunition load are not so few. Armor-piercing shells (unlike high-explosive fragmentation) do not shoot tens of thousands" at squares". One or two hits of a 76-mm projectile in the summer of 41 was enough to destroy any German tank. If the order of April 29 was carried out by June 22, then the 10th Panzer Division should have had more than 2 thousand soldiers. Theoretically, this could have been enough, if not for the entire 1st Panzer Group of the Wehrmacht, then for that single German division (11th TD, 143 tanks), which the 10th Panzer faced. But it wasn't enough...

Traditional Soviet historiography calls it "unpreparedness for war." Did not have time. "History has given us little time." Now, if the war had begun in the summer of 1942, then there would have been order in the country ... Iron Stalinist order ...

By the way, about Stalin. In the text of the report of the Acting Commander of the 10th Panzer Division, which was published in SBD No. 33, there is the following phrase: “ *In a difficult situation, the division gained a lot of combat experience, grew up a significant layer of combat assets and rallied even more around Lenin's party.*” (63, p. 213) It couldn't be in the document. This cannot be, because it can never be. This is not a question of fear, fear of responsibility - this simply could not be. A priest in an Orthodox church cannot address the believers with the words "Allah Akbar." The one to whom they pray in the Orthodox Church is called differently. The party was called "the party of Lenin-Stalin". This phrase was tightly hammered into the head and into the fingers. Nobody could write "Lenin's party" in 1941. Everyone knew the name of the party that leads us from victory to victory. If the compilers of the secret collection, intended (as stated in the preface) for officers and generals, considered it possible, in order to ensure "political correctness arr. 1957" change the original text of the published document in such an insignificant trifle, then what was done with serious figures and facts?

Nevertheless, we will work with what we have. Let's start as earlier, with an assessment of the staffing of divisions of the corps with tanks.

	KB	T-34	T-28	BT-7	T-26	Всего
10-я тд	63	38	31	181	30	363
37-я тд	1	34	0	258	23	316
212-я мд	0	0	0	32	5	37
Всего:	64	72	31	471	58	716

Like other mechanized corps of the Kyiv OVO (South-Western Front), the 15th MK consisted of three parts, very different in their degree of combat readiness. The 212th motorized division (like all other "200th" md) was a completely "raw" division of the formation of the spring of 41. The lack of vehicles (we will assume that such a lack was available) and horse composition turned it into a sedentary rifle division, however, reinforced by a group of 37 light tanks and 17 T-37/40 amphibious tankettes. However, the low mobility of the 212th MD did not prevent her in any way. In accordance with the order of the front command, the 212th MD was withdrawn from the corps from the very beginning of the war **and left in place** of its permanent

cantonment, in the city of Brody, with the task of defending this important road junction. Judging by all the reports, the division defended Brody until June 28, when this city was occupied by German infantry without any fight. However, from the memoirs of Ryabyshev and Popel it is clear that they did not find any division at Brody at all. Already on July 1, during the beginning of the general withdrawal of parts of the 15th MK, in the area of Olejuv, the division commander, Major General Baranov, and the chief of staff, Colonel Pershakov, were missing. In fact, S. V. Baranov was wounded, captured and died of typhus in a prisoner of war camp near Zamostye in February 1942. After losing command, the 212th MD quickly and completely collapsed - across the Dnieper to Piryatin by July 12 from the entire division, "who had almost complete security with the personnel of the Red Army" and did not actually participate in major battles, **only 745 people came out ...**

The fighting of the tank divisions of the 15th MK began at 09:50 on June 22, when the advance detachment of the 10th TD as part of the 3rd battalion of the 20th tank regiment and the 2nd battalion of the 10th motorized rifle regiment advanced to the border along the route Zolochiv - Radekhov. In the evening, at 10 p.m., the detachment met with the enemy *"with a force of up to two infantry battalions with anti-tank guns"* (probably, these were the advanced units of the 57th Wehrmacht Infantry Division, which broke through the defenses of the Soviet troops in the Sokal-Krystynopol area). *"As a result of the battle, 6 enemy anti-tank guns and up to an infantry platoon were destroyed. Our losses are 2 tanks. By the end of June 22, Radekhov occupied the advanced detachment ..."* It was the first and, alas, the last success of the 10th Panzer Division, and indeed the entire 15th Mechanized Corps.

In the meantime (at 6 p.m. on June 22) the main forces of the 10th and 37th Panzer Divisions began advancing towards Radekhov-Lopatin. The task was set by him in the highest degree resolutely: *"to destroy the Sokal group of the enemy, preventing it from retreating to the western bank of the Bug River"* (that is, on the first day of the war, the Soviet command was concerned about how to prevent the aggressor from escaping back to the adjacent territory). With the start of movement, the tank regiments of the 10th TD got stuck (about 15–20 km from their places of permanent deployment) in swamps, and units of the 37th TD "at 14.00 on June 23 received from the arrived commander of the 15th mechanized corps, Major General Karpezo enemy in the area

Adams. Subsequently, it turned out that there were no enemy tanks in the Adama area ...

"While parts of the 10th and 37th tank divisions wandered through forests and swamps, the 11th tank division of the Wehrmacht met at 5 hours and 15 minutes on June 23 on the outskirts of Radekhov with the advance detachment 10th Panzer Division. A fierce unequal battle ensued, in which the German division was opposed not by the 15th mechanized corps and not by one of its divisions, but only by two battalions without armor-piercing shells for the T-34 guns. *"The results of the battle: 20 enemy tanks, 16 anti-tank guns and up to an infantry platoon were destroyed. Lost: BT tanks - 20 pieces, T-34 - 6 pieces, 7 people were killed, 11 people were wounded, 32 people were missing ..."* Finally, at three o'clock in the afternoon, two regiments of the 10th Panzer Division (19- The 1st tank regiment continued to wallow in the swamp and had not yet overcome the distance of 40 km from Brody to Radekhov). *"The attack of the motorized rifle and 20th tank regiments of the 10th tank division without artillery support, in the presence of clearly superior enemy forces located at an advantageous line, was unsuccessful, and Radekhov remained behind the enemy. 5 enemy tanks and 12 anti-tank guns were knocked out ..."* The commander's report did not say anything

about the division's own losses in this battle. This strange battle on June 23, during which Soviet tankers were forced to scratch the armor of enemy tanks with fragmentation shells, turned out to be the first and only clash of the 15th mechanized corps with German tank formations (strictly speaking, in mid-July 41, the remnants of units of the 15th MK in the form of a detachment of 21 tanks and a combined motorized infantry battalion under the command of the commander of the 10th TD, Major General Ogurtsov, took part in a multi-day tank battle near Berdichev). The Germans, feeling increasing pressure on the southern flank of the 1st TGr, left Radekhov for Berestechko (where on the evening of June 23 they captured the most important crossings across the Styr River) and further from Berestechko along the highway to Dubno. Meanwhile, parts of the 15th mechanized corps (like a boxer in the ring, dancing before striking) made some kind of chaotic movement inside the "triangle" Radekhov - Brody - Busk. Parts of the 10th and 37th TDs, continuously replacing each other at different starting lines, driven by order

to an attack on Berestechko, then to a second attack on Radekhiv, then to a repulse of an offensive by a non-existent enemy who "broke through" to Brody, or even to a withdrawal to Ternopil ... Although the geometric dimensions of the named "triangle" do not exceed 50–60 km per side, The 10th and 37th tank divisions worked out (judging by the report of the command of the 15th MK) 10-13 engine hours per day.

All this confusion ended at six o'clock on the evening of June 26 with a scene quite worthy of a horror

movie. In the report on the hostilities of the 15th MK we read: *"18 enemy aircraft heavily bombed the command post of the corps ... The bombing continued for 50 minutes, as a result, 2 Red Army soldiers were wounded and 1 was killed."*

18 planes, 50 minutes of bombing, losses - 3 people? During this raid, the corps commander, Major General Ignatiy Ivanovich Karpezo, was killed. Colleagues immediately, in the forest near the town of Toporuv, buried the general. But then Ivan Vasilyevich Lutai, the deputy commander for political affairs, arrived at the broken corps command post, in other words, the corps commissar. He arrived, listened to the report on the death of the commander - and ordered to dig a fresh grave. Front-line writer V.V. Karpov, a member of the Central Committee of the CPSU of the last term, the last first secretary of the board of the Union of Writers of the USSR, in his famous book of praising the wisdom of Marshal of Victory, gives the following explanation for the actions of the commissar: Ivan Vasilievich, they say, lost his temper from grief and began to fight over grave like a hysterical young lady ... It is hard to believe in such a thing. Our commissars had a biography and upbringing too harsh to be presented in this way. The haste of his subordinates, apparently, alerted Lutai, and he, rather with a revolver in his hand than with tears on his face, decided to personally investigate the cause of the death of the corps commander. The grave was dug up - Carpezo was alive, however, unconscious, in a severe concussion. The vigilance and perseverance shown by Lutai saved the general (I.I. Karpezo lived until 1987 and passed away at the age of 89), but no one managed to save the 15th MK from the

defeat, to which he was already rolling irresistibly. While two tank divisions of the 15th mechanized corps were rushing through the swampy forest, the German infantry (262, 297, 57, 75th infantry divisions) entered the Radekh

the slowness of the command of the 15th MK, hastily created a defensive line along the banks of the small forest streams of Radostanka, Slonovka, Plyashivka. The shell shock of the corps commander and the leapfrog orders of the command of the South-Western Front on June 26-27 (either retreat to Ternopil, then advance on Berestechko) led to the fact that the tank divisions of the 15th mechanized corps went on the general offensive only on the morning of June 28.

So we come to the main question: in what composition did the 10th and 37th Panzer Divisions launch the offensive on the morning of June 28? The losses of the 10th TD in the battle on June 23 and in subsequent skirmishes with the enemy are described in detail, for each day and battle, in a report signed on August 2 by the new (after Carpezo was wounded) acting commander of the 15th MK, Colonel Ermolaev. As for the 37th TD, until June 28, it had no combat contact with the enemy and, accordingly, combat losses - as well as losses from enemy aircraft - did not have at all. Let's summarize all the available information in two tables:

10-я тд	КВ	Т-34	Т-28	БТ-7	Т 26	Всего:
Было в дивизии по состоянию на 22 июня	63	38	51	181	30	363
Из них исправны и вышли в поход	63	37	44	147	27	318
Боевые потери 22 - 26 июня	13	6	0	32	2	53
Фактическое наличие к исходу дня 26 июня	10	5	4	20	0	39
	40	26	40	95	25	226

37-я тд	КВ	Т-34	БТ-7	Т-26	Всего:
Было в дивизии по состоянию на 22 июня	1	34	258	23	316
Оставлено в г. Кременец	1	0	15	10	26
Боевые потери 22 - 26 июня	0	0	0	0	0
Фактическое наличие к исходу дня 26 июня	0	29	185	7	221
		5	58	6	69

So, the most powerful in the 15th MK (and one of the best in terms of staffing and training of personnel in the entire Red Army), the 10th TD in five days turned into a pretty battered tank battalion. Of the 318 serviceable tanks as of June 22, by the end of the day on June 26, only 39 remained in service. Losses of "unknown origin" amounted to **226 tanks**. For five days. Even if we assume that the report of the division commander missed some combat losses during episodic skirmishes with German infantry units, this inaccuracy does not explain the discrepancy between the number of combat (53 tanks) and total (279 tanks) losses. Particularly impressive are the dynamics and structure of the losses of the triple-turret T-28s, which quietly disappear, probably without having time to fire a single shot at the enemy. If the report is to be believed, the 48-ton KVs with their 75 mm armour, are in no way superior in terms of combat survivability to the light BT-7s and T-26s with bulletproof armor. The most surprising thing is that neither in the report of the acting division commander, nor in the report of the acting corps commander, these egregious facts are even commented on!

So far, things are much better in the 37th Panzer Division. 221 tanks (out of 316) are ready to fight. Another 26 are waiting in the wings at the place of permanent deployment of the division in Kremenets. Three Thursdays of the total number of "hopelessly outdated" BT-7s withstood many days of stupid throwing along forest roads and, judging by the report of the division commander, are still in good order.

On the morning of June 28, the 15th MK (together with the 8th TD attached to it and the composition of the 4th mechanized corps, which, as noted above, was "reduced" to a group of 65 tanks) went on the offensive in the general direction of Busk - Lopatin - Berestechko. By that time, enemy tanks had already left Berestechko far to the east, to Rovno and Ostrog, and the 15th mechanized corps could only meet with individual units of the 297th and 262nd Wehrmacht infantry divisions. The report of the battle on June 28 in the report of the acting commander of the 15th MK is preceded by a long list of reasons why an armored fist strike, in which, even after all the mysterious disappearances, there were still more than three hundred tanks, was

doomed to defeat. In particular: "...Location. In the offensive zone of the corps to Berestechko - 5 serious water barriers: r. Radostavka, r. Ostrówka, r. Zhe

Loshuvka and r. Sokolowka. All rivers have swampy banks and are hard-to-reach frontiers for tanks. The entire terrain in the offensive zone is wooded and swampy, the commanding heights are on the side of the enemy. Conclusion: the terrain is not conducive to the offensive ...
"There is no

need to argue with such a conclusion. It remains only to ask the question - on what terrain did the divisions of the 1st Panzer Group of the Wehrmacht advance? How could they overcome the mighty forest streams not marked on any geographical map (Radostavka, Ostruvka, Zhechka, Loshuvka and Sokoluvka), as well as the Western Bug, Styr, Goryn, Sluch, and then the Dnieper? Where did the "command heights" appear in the swampy forest and why did they end up in the hands of the enemy, who appeared in this forest only a few days (or even hours) ago? However, in this matter, the corps commander only followed in the "general channel" of complaints about the terrain and the opposing enemy, as was asked by the higher authorities. So, as early as July 3, 1941, the head of the Armored Directorate of the South-Western Front, in a report addressed to the head of the Main ABTU of the Red Army, explained *"huge losses and the incapacity of the remaining materiel"* by the fact that the mechanized corps had to operate in *"almost tank-inaccessible wooded and swampy areas"*, in the face of *"stubborn resistance from the prevailing (???) enemy and the absence of armor-piercing shells for the KV and T-34."* (63, p. 134) The latter is undoubtedly true. But who was supposed to take care that at least a small part of the 132 thousand armor-piercing 76-mm rounds was delivered to the military district that received more KV and T-34 tanks than all the other districts combined? How could the head of the ABTU of the Kyiv OVO eat, drink, sleep, perform marital and official duties, knowing that there were no armor-piercing shells in the tank divisions standing near the border? Or did he only find out about it on July 3rd?

Descriptions of the battle on June

28, contained in the reports of the commanders of the 15th MK, 10th and 37th Panzer Divisions, are very lengthy and confusing. A brief summary looks something like this:

"... During the day, the units fought for the capture of Lopatin ... the advancing units of the 10th TD were detained in front of peat bogs, in the area of \u200b\u200bwhich the only road turned out to be

completely unsuitable for crossing tanks ... During the battle for Lopatin at the turn of the river. Ostrovka, the advancing units were surrounded (was the tank division surrounded by enemy infantry?). Staying the 10th TD in this area for the night, being surrounded, was pointless (???) and could lead to the loss of the entire division ...

... Having suffered significant losses and not having sufficient tank support (???), the motorized rifle regiment of the 37th TD was forced to suspend the offensive and go on the defensive on the western bank of the river. Styr ... Due to a temporary loss of control, the 73rd tank regiment of the 37th TD with great difficulty managed to be transported to the western bank of the river. Styr ... This made it possible for the remnants of the enemy battalion, which was defending the crossings at Stanislavchik (an infantry battalion against a tank division), to retreat into the forest ... An attempt to cross the bridges across the river. Ostrovka was unsuccessful, as the lead 2-3 tanks that approached the bridge were instantly knocked out and caught fire. Several tanks tried to go around the bridge on the right and left, but this proved impossible; tanks got stuck in a swamp and were hit by enemy artillery fire ... From such a situation, it was clear that it would be pointless to continue attacks without artillery, infantry and aviation, in turn, to remain at the reached line on the southern bank of the river. Ostróvka was also risky...

... With the onset of darkness, the commander of the 15th mechanized corps ordered the withdrawal of units of the 10th tank division to the east in the area of the 37th TD, and later, in connection with the already completed (???) exit from the battle, the 37th tank division, an order to withdraw from

the battle and return to its original position ... " It's hard to believe that all this happened on its own territory, in the area of \u200b\u200bthe permanent pre-war deployment of the 15th mechanized corps, i.e. where every road, path, ditch, ford, bridge had to be thoroughly studied. It is hard to believe that we have a description of the combat operations of the mechanized corps, which included pontoon-bridge, sapper, engineering, repair evacuation, and reconnaissance units. For each tank in the 15th MK there were (as of June 1, 1941) 45 personnel. Of these 45 people, there were at most five members of the KV crew inside the tank (three people in the BT). Rest

should have provided the tankers with reconnaissance, repairs, fuel, shells, bridges, crossings and, most importantly, control ...

Losses of tanks of the 10th Panzer Division are specified specifically: 1 KV, 1 T-34, 7 BT-7. The consolidated regiment of the 8th Panzer Division lost 11 tanks of unspecified types. There is no data on the loss of tanks of the 37th TD, but judging by the description of the battle, the division lost no more than 15-20 tanks. On the morning of June 29, the 15th mechanized corps was withdrawn to the "front reserve", which practically meant a non-stop retreat to the Dnieper. During the day of the strange battle on June 28, the 10th TD lost (judging by the report of the commander) seven people: 1 was killed and 6 people were wounded. In total, in a few days of fighting and during a multi-day march to the east, the division lost 210 people killed, 587 - wounded and 3,353 - missing, "lagging behind on the march", etc.

The 37th Panzer Division, whose entire participation in what is called the "counterattack of the mechanized corps of the Southwestern Front", was reduced to helpless attempts to push the German infantry battalion from the crossing near the town of Stanislavchik, lost 75% of its personnel. 467 senior officers, 423 junior commanders and 1,533 privates entered the concentration area near Pryatin (beyond the Dnieper). Simply put, during the retreat to the Dnieper, the division almost completely "melted". The state of the tank fleet of the 15th

mechanized corps was as follows:

10-я тд	КВ	Т-34	Т-28	БТ-7	Т-26	Всего
Фактическое наличие к исходу дня 26 июня	10	5	4	20	0	39
Боевые потери 28 июня	1	1	0	7	0	9
Фактическое наличие к 6 июля	2	1	1	12	2(?)	20

37-я тд	Т-34	БТ-7	Т-26	Всего:
Фактическое наличие к исходу дня 26 июня	29	185	7	221
Боевые потери 28 июня				20
Фактическое наличие к 6 - 8 июля	2	12	0	14

At the time of signing the report of the acting commander of the 10th Panzer Division, there were no more tanks in the division. No one. This is expressly stated in the text. (63, p. 211) There is also a table in the report with a "decoding" of the reasons for the loss of tanks. The first thing that catches your eye is a huge "range" of reasons. Instead of a clear and understandable classification - lost from enemy impact (hit), lost without enemy impact for technical reasons (broken), abandoned - the report's compilers came up with 10 ornate types of reasons: 1) *broken and burned on the battlefield*; 2) *failed during the*

performance of a combat mission and remained in the territory occupied by the enemy; 3) *did not return with crews from the battlefield after the attack*;

4) *burned down as a result of the bombing* (we note right away that in

this category is exactly ONE tank BT-7. - M.S.);

5) *left with the crews surrounded by the enemy due to technical malfunctions or lack of fuel and lubricants*; 6) *remained due to the lack of fuel and lubricants and the impossibility to submit it, since the area is captured by the enemy*;

7) *went missing with the crews*; 8) *destroyed at the collection points of emergency vehicles due to the impossibility of evacuation during withdrawal*; 9)

left during the withdrawal due to technical malfunctions and inability to recover and evacuate;

10) *stuck on obstacles with the inability to remove and evacuate*.

Only paragraphs 1 and 4 clearly refer to losses from enemy impact. The specific meaning of paragraphs 2 and 3 is unclear. If the tank "did not burn down in

as a result of the bombing" and not "broken and burned on the battlefield" (p. 1), then for what other reason did he "not return with crews from the battlefield after the attack"? A tank is not a long-range bomber that flew behind enemy lines and no one else saw it, a tank battle takes place in front of thousands of people ... How does paragraph 2 differ from paragraph 1? Strictly speaking, starting from the morning of June 22, all tank losses can be summed up under the category "failed in the performance of a combat mission," and after a rapid (on some days in July - 150-200 km a day) retreat to the east, all tanks, without exception, remained "in territory occupied by the enemy." We should not forget that this report was written at the end of July 41st, hundreds of kilometers from the scene, in conditions that completely excluded the possibility of inspecting the lost vehicles and verifying the reliability of the stated reasons and reasons for the disappearance of

three hundred tanks ... Probably for in order for the statistics of losses to acquire at least some intelligible meaning, it is necessary to combine p.p. 1 and 4 ("combat losses"), p.p. 2 and 3 ("presumably combat"), p.p. 4 - 10 ("without enemy influence"). In this case, the following picture emerges:

10-я тд	KB	T-34	T-28	BT-7	T-26	Всего:
Исправны и вышли в поход 22 июня	63	37	44	147	27	318
Боевые потери	11	20	4	54	7	96
Предположительно боевые	11	4	4	5	5	29
Без воздействия противника	34	8	36	41	12	131
	7	5	0	47	3	62

So, two-thirds of the tanks, which were in good working order on the evening of June 22, were lost without enemy action.

In particular, 41 impenetrable HF out of 63 available. It is noteworthy that not one of the 10 crafty formulations came up to explain the reasons for the loss of 62 tanks (and this is a tank brigade according to the states of the autumn of 1941). The compilers of the report simply kept silent about them.

Another confirmation that the figures in the reports and reports of the 41st year should be checked, and not just trusted on the go, can be the absolutely fantastic reports of enemy losses found in these reports:

*"... As a result of hostilities, **the 32nd Panzer Division** (4th MK) from 22.6 to 14.7.41 in total destroyed 113 tanks, 96 anti-tank guns, 463 motorcycles, 4 cars, 93 trucks, 3 tractors, 8 aircraft, 80 guns, 10 mortars, 3,916 enemy soldiers and officers **the 10th Panzer Division destroyed:** tanks - 128, anti-tank guns - 198, guns - 117, aircraft - 20, trucks - 81, mortars - 26 and infantry - up to 2.5 thousand*

Human...

*... In total, for the period from 22.6 to 10.7.41, units of **the 37th Panzer Division** destroyed: up to 4 infantry battalions, 24 tanks, 8 tankettes, 16 anti-tank guns, 4 76-mm guns, 44 transport vehicles. 19 motorcycles, 20 aircraft, 1 armored vehicle, 1 tank, 2 cars, up to an artillery battalion Troops of the 8th mechanized corps, without the group of N.K. Popel, destroyed 4 motorcycle and 5 infantry*

battalions, up to 200 tanks, more than 100 guns different calibers, 9 aircraft and captured over 300 enemy soldiers and officers The group of N.K. Popel in the battles near Dubno destroyed more than 200 tanks and up to 5 enemy infantry battalions ... "

In total, three mechanized corps of the Southwestern Front (4th MK, 8th MK, 15th MK) were "destroyed" in the first two weeks of the war (and this is without taking into account the "achievements" of the 8th TD, 81st MD, 212th md) 665 tanks, 8 tankettes, 611 guns and even 48 enemy aircraft. In fact, in the two tank divisions of the Wehrmacht (11th and 16th), with parts of which, at least theoretically, the 4th, 8th and 15th mechanized corps could meet, there were only 289 tanks. Their real irretrievable losses by the beginning of September (i.e., two months after the so-called "tank battle in Western Ukraine") amounted to:

- 39 tanks (4 Pz-IV, 24 Pz-III, 10 Pz-II, 1 Pz. Bef) in the 11th tank divisions;

- 66 tanks (10 Pz-IV, 36 Pz-III, 16 Pz-II, 4 Pz. Bef) in the 16th Panzer Division. (10, p. 206)

Chapter 16

Documents that make it possible to identify and detail the phenomenal "tank loss" that engulfed the Red Army in the first weeks of the war were declassified more than forty years ago. On the copy of the Collection of Combat Documents of the Great Patriotic War No. 35, with which I worked and from which most of the information given in the two previous chapters was taken, there is a blue stamp: "Declassified. General Staff Directive No. 203995 dated 11/30/65" However, in our country, declassifying and making available is not the same thing at all. To the so-called "general public", these documents are unknown (and, frankly, inaccessible) to this day. But what is interesting: the so-called Soviet "historians", continuing to rapturously lie "about the multiple numerical superiority of the enemy in tanks," began to prepare ahead of time for the moment when the awl would nevertheless come out of the bag. Even in the most "stagnant years" they had already managed to announce to the city and the world that Soviet tanks were unreliable, primitive, worn out, with exhausted motor resources ... In a word, they crumbled on the go. On such tanks, not only to fight - it was impossible to drive 100 km from point A to point B

Unfortunately, I'm not kidding. Not only at the level of the wall newspaper of the garment factory, but also in publications claiming to be scientifically fundamental, for four decades, nonsense has been circulated that by the beginning of the war, "three-quarters of old-type tanks needed repair", and either 29%, or 44% - Under major renovation. It's sad, but even the compilers of such an authoritative statistical study as "Secret Classification Removed" did not hesitate to tell readers that out of 14.2 thousand Soviet tanks that were in the Army on June 22, 1941, "there were 3.8 thousand fully combat-ready . units". (2, p. 345) And although real data on the technical condition of tanks have been known since at least November 1993 (since the well-known publication of N. Zolotov and S. Isaev "Were Combat Ready" in No. 11 "Military

historical magazine"), three-quarters of the defective tanks continue to crawl through the pages of the most modern books and articles. N. Zolotov and S. Isaev also showed the truly elegant method by which many years of falsification was built. The fact is that on the basis of the Order of the People's Commissar of Defense of the USSR No. 15 of January 10, 1940, the division of armored vehicles into the following five categories was provided: 1. New, unused and quite suitable for

use for its intended purpose;

2. Being in operation, quite serviceable and fit for use for its intended purpose; 3. Requiring repair in the district workshops (medium repair); 4. Requiring repair in central workshops and factories (overhaul); 5. Worthless (tanks of this category were deregistered and were not included in the summary

sheets). I hope the reader has already guessed how the Soviet "historians" fooled him: they included only the 1st category,

that is, completely new tanks, into the category of "combat-ready", i.e., completely new tanks, and the entire 2nd category was classified as "in need of repair". To make it completely clear - imagine a "traffic cop" who agrees to issue a technical inspection coupon exclusively and only to the owners of new vehicles that have not been in operation for a single day ... The last pre-war "Statement of the availability and technical condition of combat vehicles as of June 1, 1941" (TsAMO, f. 38, op. 11353, d. 924, l. 135-138, l. 909, l. 2 - 18) indicates that the troops of the five western border

districts were in service (not counting obsolete and withdrawn from the combat units of tankettes T-27) 12,782 tanks, of which 10,540 tanks were "fit for use for their intended purpose" (82.5% **of the entire fleet**). In particular, in the Kiev OVO (the future South-Western Front) there were 5,465 tanks, of which 4,788 units (**87.6%**) were assigned to the 1st and 2nd categories. These figures, however, do not describe the technical condition of the tanks that were directly in the mechanized corps of the Kyiv OVO. The fact is that there were more tanks in the district than tanks in mechanized corps. In service with eight (22nd MK, 15th MK, 4th MK, 8th MK, 16th MK, 9th MK, 19th MK, 24th MK) mechanized corps

Kiev OVO had "only" 4,808 tanks out of a total of 5,465. More than six hundred tanks were part of reconnaissance battalions of rifle divisions, in tank regiments of cavalry divisions, in training centers, at repair bases and in warehouses. There is every reason to assume that it was the mechanized corps, and not the rifle divisions, that received new (or almost new) tanks, respectively, and the percentage of "fit for use for its intended purpose" in the mechanized corps was even higher than the average for the district.

Now let's "tweak up the sharpness" and see how things were with the technical condition and repair of equipment in one of the formations of the Red Army, in the 10th tank division of the 15th mechanized corps - the same division, on the story of the phenomenal loss of tanks in which we ended the previous chapter. Of the total number of 363 tanks of the division on the morning of June 22, 318 units (88%) were serviceable and went on a campaign. How far could they have gone? We open again the "Report on the combat activities of the 10th Panzer Division on the front of the fight against German fascism" and there we read: " ... *the KV and T-34 tanks, without exception, were all new vehicles and by the time of the*

hostilities they had worked up to 10 hours (passed in mostly run-in) ... T-28 tanks had an average power

reserve of up to 75 hours ... BT-7 tanks had a power reserve of 40 to 100 hours ... T-26 tanks were mostly in good

technical condition and worked only 75 hours ... " (63, p. 207)

Adopted in 1938, the "Manual for Operation and Park Service"

established the following minimum

overhaul periods: (30) - for

the T-28 - 200 engine hours;

- for BT-7 - 200 hours; - for T-26 - 150 hours. These figures do not at all mean that at the 151st hour of operation the engine of the T-26 tank must inevitably break down. Nothing of the kind - we are only talking about the fact that every 150 hours it is necessary to carry out a set of works included in the list of "medium repairs". Regular medium repairs will allow the engine to work guaranteed for 600 hours before the overhaul (400 hours for the T-28, 600 hours for the BT-7). Medium repairs are carried out by military repair shops and bases, and only

for overhaul, the tank must be loaded onto a railway platform and sent to a factory or a large centralized repair center. So, in the 10th TD in the first three weeks of the war, 240 current and 61 medium tank repairs were completed - and this was in an environment of catastrophic defeat and retreat! There is nothing to be surprised here - in the tank division, according to the staffing table, there were 30 personnel per tank. There was someone to deal with the repair, maintenance, preventive inspection of military equipment. Now let's move on from "hours" to understandable to every kilometer

run. With a very modest (and absurdly low for a high-speed BT tank) cruising speed of 10 km/h, the "pathetic" balance of 75-100 engine hours turns into 750-1000 kilometers. For a regular bus, which must carry passengers from morning to evening, this is negligible. More than enough for a tank. Tanks don't live that long in war. A major offensive operation on a front-line scale involves advancing 200–250–300 kilometers. Taking into account the maneuvering inevitable in the conditions of multi-day battles, these figures should be increased by 1.5-2 times, up to 500-600 km. All. The tank, which "survived" to the end of a large front-line operation, fully justified all the costs of its production and operation. After that, it can be written off with a clear conscience or put on a major overhaul. But what about the war? But the war (more precisely, the offensive) stopped anyway. In addition to the overhaul periods of equipment operation, there are also "inter-operational periods" of operational pauses that are not precisely defined by any instruction.

No army in World War II (with one notable exception in the summer and fall of 1941) could advance non-stop. I hope the attentive reader remembered the figure of 1 kiloton of howitzer shells, which, according to Soviet standards, had to be used to suppress the firepower of one Wehrmacht infantry division. But a major offensive operation on a front-line scale involves the destruction of not one, but several dozen enemy divisions. And not only howitzers, but also machine guns, mortars, divisional, anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns will have to fire at the enemy. Consequently, in the area of concentration and deployment of advancing troops, it is necessary

submit tens and hundreds of thousands of tons of shells, mines, cartridges, air bombs, food, fuel (more than 9 thousand echelons - not wagons, but echelons - with ammunition) were delivered to the Kursk Bulge. These cyclopean mountains of wooden charging boxes must be delivered by rail to the supply stations established by the operation plan, unloaded from the wagons, loaded into cars, taken to the firing positions of each battery ... That is why the wars of the middle of the 20th century went on in the "frequency-pulse mode": one - two months of accumulation of resources, then - a month of offensive battles, and everything repeats again. It was during these absolutely inevitable operational pauses that the medium and major repairs of the surviving and still maintainable tanks were to be carried out. In

reality, in 1941–1945, it happened like this: *“During the battles, the arrival of tanks from factories in parts was an extremely rare phenomenon. Therefore, the restoration of damaged armored vehicles during the battles and its quick return to service was the most significant source of replenishing losses in tanks. For example, in the 3rd Guards Tank Army in the Lvov-Sandomierz operation (summer 1944), the number of repaired tanks and self-propelled guns significantly exceeded the number of combat vehicles available in the tank army at the beginning of the operation. In other words, during one operation, each tank (self-propelled gun) **went out of action two or three times** (hereinafter, it is underlined by me. - M.S.) and the same number of times returned to the combat formations of units and formations ...*

... An analysis of the data on the losses of tank armies in 11 offensive operations allows us to note a number of important points in the problem under

*consideration. Firstly, **the irretrievable** losses of tank armies in an offensive operation lasting an average of 15–20 days amounted to about **25% of the initial number** of tanks and self-propelled guns, and the total losses were about **82 %**.*

*Secondly, combat vehicles to be restored accounted for up to 70% of the total losses (that is, 57% of the original number of tanks. - M.S.). Among the vehicles to be restored, there were approximately 70% of tanks and self-propelled guns that failed due to combat damage, and 30% (**i.e., only 17% of***

initial quantity - M.S.) *due to jamming and technical malfunctions ... The percentage of tank repairs to the number of tanks and self-propelled guns available at the beginning of the operation ranged from 115% (Belgorod-Kharkov operation, 1st Guards TA) to 221% (Vistula-Oder operation 2nd Guards TA). (38,*

pp. 718-219) These are excerpts from the monograph "Tank Strike", which has been repeatedly cited above. The author is General of the Army A.I. Radzievsky, head of the Military Academy. Frunze, during the war years - chief of staff of the 2nd Guards Tank Army. Among the great variety of other documents and facts, the monograph by A. I. Radzievsky also provides data on the losses of personnel of tank armies in the battles of 1943–1945 that are very important for understanding the causes and

circumstances of the "tank death" of June 1941. "The losses of tank armies during the offensive operations ranged from 7.2 to 24.9% of the number of personnel by the beginning of the offensive. In particular, the 3rd Guards. The TA lost 14.5% in the Lvov-Sandomierz operation, and the 4th TA - 10.8% of the initial number of personnel, the 2nd TA in the Brest-Lublin operation - 10.2%. Irrecoverable losses ranged from 16 to 30.8% of the total losses (the most severe were the irretrievable losses of the 1st TA in the Belgorod-Kharkov operation - 6.0% of the initial number of personnel. - M.S.) It should be emphasized that approximately 90% of the losses were the personnel of motorized rifle units and units. The tankers, on the other hand, suffered less losses ... The ratio between the combat losses of tanks and self-propelled guns and the losses in personnel in offensive operations was 1: 6 (Vistula-Oderskaya, Proskurov-Chernovitskaya), 1: 4 (Lvov-Sandomierzskaya. Berlin)

". (38, Str.242) Let's sum up the first results. Quantitative characteristics (losses of tanks and personnel) of the so-called "counterattack of the mechanized corps of the Red Army in June 1941" absolutely do not fit into the "normal" framework, confirmed by many years of experience in the war, statistics of dozens of offensive operations. Normal (as far as the word is generally applicable to war) is the situation in which the irretrievable losses of the personnel of tank formations during a major front-line operation are calculated in units of percent, and the total losses (killed and wounded) average 10-15% of

original number. The number of destroyed tanks is enormous, in some cases it is several times higher than the initial number of tanks. But due to the continuous restoration and repair, the irretrievable losses of tanks during the operation do not exceed a quarter of the original number. The main reason for the failure of tanks is, of course, the impact of the enemy. Technical malfunctions and getting stuck on the ground are less than one-fifth of the original number of tanks. This is how a warring army fights.

In June 41, everything is not so. On all counts. The irretrievable losses of tanks of all the corps mentioned in the previous chapters (6th MK, 4th MK, 8th MK, 15th MK) are 90 percent or more. Losses from enemy impact are 3-4 times less than non-combat losses. For "technical" reasons, not 17, but 70 or more percent of military equipment was lost. The loss of personnel in general is difficult to describe unambiguously. In cases where the available documents indicate the number of fighters and commanders remaining in divisions and corps by mid-June, then it does not exceed 30–50% of the original, while in a number of formations (6th MK, 212th MD and 37th TD 15 MK, 81st MD 4 MK, 34th TD 8th MK) personnel losses exceed 75–90 percent or more. At the same time, the loss of people in specific clashes is even less than the number of lost tanks!

The most "convenient" explanation for all these gloomy miracles is - according to many modern authors - aloud uttering aloud the magic word "RETREAT". And everything becomes clear to everyone. *"The acute shortage of means of evacuation, the lack of powerful tractors led to the fact that failed tanks had to be left on the territory occupied by the enemy ..."* Surprisingly, none of the active propagandists of this approach to assessing the events of the beginning of the war has yet indicated those methods, with by means of which such a deplorable course of events could have been averted. And, in my opinion, there are exactly two ways to save: 1) even before the start of the war,

withdraw all available tanks beyond the Dnieper, and with the start of hostilities, move beyond the Yenisei. It is possible that in this case the Germans would not have had time to

catch up with them; 2) a less radical, but still effective method would be to change the organizational structure of tank formations. If there were two tractors for each tank in the division, then you can

it would be better not to leave tanks "in the territory occupied by the enemy." Tractors, however, also break down, and for two tractors it would be nice to have four super tractors for pulling tractors ...

A serious approach to business begins with the study of the Charter. The PU-39 Field Manual states very clearly what tasks tank units and formations are created to solve. The balance of forces of the parties in the southern theater of operations, of course, made it possible to carry out a major offensive operation in the direction of Lvov - Lublin, as was provided for both by pre-war plans and by Directive No. 3 of June 22, 1941. Most likely, in this case, all the tanks to the last would have been lost, but they would have been lost in combat and not "in territory occupied by the enemy". However, the actions of tanks in a defensive operation, which the command of the Southwestern Front seemed to be trying to carry out, are also provided for in PU-39: "391. *Tanks significantly strengthen the defense*

*and are a reliable means of defeating the enemy who has broken through into the depths of the defense. Great maneuverability, firepower and strike power of tanks should be fully used **for active operations** (emphasized by me. - M.S.). The main tasks of tanks in the defense are: a) the defeat of the enemy who broke into the defensive zone, and first of all his tanks; b) the destruction of the enemy, bypassing the flank (flanks) of the defense.*

Such an option for using large tank formations as a retreat beyond the Dnieper, during which the tanks (more precisely, the remnants of the personnel of the former tank and motorized divisions) overtook their own infantry by 200 km in space and two months in time, is not prescribed in the Charter. No reasonable allowable number of tractors could be enough for such an option, which provided for the towing of 90% of the division's tanks over a distance of 500–600 km. I dare to assure you, dear reader, that the ambulance service of your city (even if it is rich Moscow) will not cope with the situation if it receives calls from 90% of the inhabitants. Moreover, the city's telephone network simply will not be able to provide communication if 90% of the telephones dial "03" at the same time.

Let us return once again to the data from the monograph by A. I. Radzievskii. "Normal" average daily losses of tanks are 3-5 - 7% per day. In relation to the 10th Panzer Division of the 15th Mechanized Corps, this would mean 10-20 tanks per day. Maximum. The division had 29 powerful Voroshilovets tractors. With such forces, it was quite possible to ensure the evacuation of wrecked tanks from the battlefield. **Evacuation** to the nearest collection point for damaged vehicles, **and not towing** 650 km across

the Dnieper to Pyryatin. The worst of all possible, but still much better than what was done in reality, would be the option of using tanks (especially heavy KV, T-28, T-35) as fixed firing points. Of course, expensive vehicles were not made for this (*"great maneuverability, firepower and strike power of tanks should be fully used for active operations"*). Nevertheless, the transformation of faulty tanks into makeshift pillboxes is by no means an afterthought of an amateur. This is quite a standard war practice: *"... I sent Major A. Efimov for reconnaissance. An hour*

and a half later, he happily reported - there are 16 T-28 tanks without engines, but with serviceable guns ... For us, this was just a godsend. Of course, it is necessary to use these tanks as fixed firing points, bury them in the ground and place them in the direction of Borodino - Mozhaisk, where the enemy will deliver the main tank attack ... The enemy tried to enter the Mozhaisk region, but was met by direct fire from our dug-in T-28 tanks ... already the fourth tank is being fired point-blank from the T-28 by Sergeant Serebryakov... Having lost a lot of equipment, the enemy stopped for a short time..." (22)

These are lines from the memoirs of General of the Army D. D. Lelyushenko, who in October 1941 commanded the 5th Army, which entered into battle with German tank divisions on the legendary Borodino field near Moscow. And if 16 T-28s without engines are, according to the military general, "just a godsend", then 278 KV, 215 three-turret T-28s and 48 five-turret T-35s buried in the ground at the crossroads of the main roads of Western Ukraine could create big problems for the mechanized troops of the Wehrmacht, cheerfully marching on captured French buses ...

However, the proposal to bury tanks in the ground is not belated, but, on the contrary, hasty. No one has yet proved that the tanks actually broke down and lost the ability to move independently (without a tug) in 5-10 days. This very strange assumption, contrary to all logic and practical experience, has turned from a theorem that still needs to be proven into an axiom only thanks to the huge circulation of Soviet military history waste paper. The authors of non-paper studies simply and wisely avoided the issue of the losses of June 41st. For example, in the same thick monograph by Radzievsky "Tank Strike", published in 1977, only five lines were spent for the entire 41st year:

"The war unleashed by fascism on June 22, 1941 against the Soviet Union demanded from our people an enormous effort of all moral and physical strength. Due to a number of reasons, the Soviet Army was initially forced to retreat deep into the country. In heavy defensive battles, Soviet soldiers and brave tankers in their composition, inflicting significant damage to the enemy in manpower and equipment, courageously defended the cities and villages of their native land. By launching a counteroffensive near Moscow, the Soviet Army dispelled the myth of the invincibility of the fascist troops. (38. p.

17) "Due to a number of reasons..." The wise old general understood perfectly well that even he, the head of the main military academy of the country, would not be allowed to discuss these "reasons" publicly. Today we have freedom, but there is nothing to discuss. There are no tanks. Those that did not go for remelting in German open-hearth furnaces were melted down in the Urals and in Zaporozhye. There have never been any Technical Inspection Acts conducted by independent experts (better and more precisely, by a special department and the military prosecutor's office). And the commanders of the former mechanized corps, who at the end of July 1941 wrote their "Report on the combat operations", and those who accepted these reports, equally understood that nothing could be verified. The question of when the Red Army would return to the territory of "former Poland" - and whether it would return at all - was then open. The endless series of "friction clutches burned out" in these reports is no more reliable than the number of German tanks destroyed, indicated there. And

the clutches overheated and warped (it is this failure that the colloquial phrase "friction burned out" means) on the march to the battlefield. Here with *the "jamming of the engine pistons"*, everything, I hope, is clear. Either without oil in the crankcase, or without water in the radiator, and even better - without one or the other Yes, and they stopped putting up with "burning clutches" a month after the start of the mass "case" of tanks: *"I ORDER:*

1. Consider as an emergency the exit of vehicles from building for the following reasons:

— Warping of the clutch discs; — curvature of the gearshift rods; — curvature of the idler crank; - failure of the starter.

Unit commanders, in each individual case, immediately report to me through my deputy for the technical part ... " (order of the commander of the 50th TD of July 25, 1941). (63, p. 116)

Moving from vague assumptions to indisputable facts, we can firmly state that **neither before the summer of 1941, nor after it**, such a massive "death" of Soviet tanks was ever noted. Even during the first tests of the BT-5 tanks in the fall of 1933, five tanks passed along the Kharkov-Moscow route (795 km) in 57 hours.

The average speed (excluding stops) was 35 km / h, and the total average run speed is 14 km/h.

The first episode of the combat use of BT tanks was the war in Spain. On the basis of 50 BT-5 tanks, a tank regiment of the Republican army was formed, which in October 1937 entered the combat area on the river. Ebro, having made a march of 630 km in two and a half days. (94) Perhaps the most difficult test of the running capabilities of BT tanks was Khalkhin Gol. At the end of May 1939, two tank brigades (6th and 11th) made an unprecedented 800-kilometer march across the hot Mongolian steppe (the air temperature in those days reached 40 degrees, what was happening inside the steel boxes heated by the sun, you can only guess) in the area of future hostilities. Here is how the Hero of the Soviet Union K. N. Abramov, the commander of the tank battalion of the 11th brigade, describes these events:

"... For our brigade, the combat alarm sounded on May 28. We were given an hour and a half to prepare for the alarm. The battalion was ready to move in 55 minutes. There was an 800-kilometer march across the waterless Mongolian steppe, unprecedented in tension and length ... The column moved along a barely noticeable steppe road trodden by camel caravans. In some places the road disappeared - it was covered with sand. To overcome sandy and swampy areas, tanks had to be transferred from wheeled to caterpillar. Well-trained crews performed this work in 30 minutes ... " (95) By the end of the day on May 31, the

battalion in full force reached the designated area. The 6th tank brigade spent a little more time (6 days) on the 800-km march. Six years after the battles at Khalkhin Gol, in August 1945, BT-7 tanks as part of the 6th Guards TA took part in the so-called "Manchurian strategic operation". Tank brigades then marched 820 km through the Great Khingan mountain range with an average march rate of 180 km per day. (38) **Out of a total of 1,019 tanks of all types, only 78** (seventy-eight) units were lost during the operation! (2, p. 373) The old "beteshki" (the most recent of which were released five years ago) withstood such a test. But even if we assume that all six years the tanks simply stood on conservation, then in this case their technical condition could only worsen: the rubber hoses were brittle, the seals were "wrung out", the contacts were corroded ... And what seems quite incredible is the percentage of serviceable tanks of the Far Eastern Front as of September 30, 1945. After the hardest forced march, after battles with separate groups of Japanese troops, more than 80% of the tanks were serviceable: (96)

	Всего по списку	Исправны	%%
T-34	1 899	1 794	94
BT-7	1 030	797	77
T-26	1 461	1 272	87
T-38	325	304	94
Всего танков	5 548	4 841	87
САУ всех типов	1 422	1 393	98

The history of the T-34 tank, as it is written about in all books, began with the fact that in March 1940 the first two experimental gunks under their own power traveled **3,000 km** along the route Kharkov - Moscow - Minsk - Kiev - Kharkov. We passed in the spring thaw, along country roads (moving along the main highways and even using bridges in the daytime was forbidden for reasons of secrecy). Yes, such a march was not easy for the technique - the ferrodo on the main clutch disks burned out, chips were found on the gear teeth of the gearboxes, and the brakes burned out. In the end, the turnaround time for serial tanks was set not at 3,000 km (such a fantastic figure was provided for by the terms of reference), but "only" at 1,000 km. In the cold of January 1943, during the offensive Operation Don, Soviet tank brigades marched more than 300 km across the snow-covered Zadonsk steppe and defeated the large forces of the German Army Group A, which broke through in the summer of 1942 to the oil-bearing regions of Mozdok and Grozny. In the summer of 1944, during Operation Bagration (the defeat of the German Army Group Center in Belarus), the 5th Guards. TA, advancing off-road, among forests and swamps, traveled 900-1300 km at an advance rate of up to 60 km per day and a total consumption of motor resources of 160-170 hours. (38, p. 227) In May 1945, the tanks of the 3rd and 4th Guards Tank Armies traveled 400 km from Berlin to Prague. Through mountainous wooded areas, in five days, and at the same time - without significant technical losses. The legendary "thirty-four" went through the entire war, in many armies of the world it stood in service until the mid-50s. Captured Soviet tanks and Komsomolets light artillery tractors served in the Finnish army right up to 1961! Without spare parts, without instructions for use, among the Finnish snows and swamps. And for some reason, no one complained that Soviet armored vehicles crumbled after passing 60 km (the distance from Brod to Radekhov).

We can find even more amazing confirmation of the reliability of the survivability of Soviet equipment by analyzing the losses of the Red Army in 1941 - but not tanks, but cars.

We open once again the report of the commander of the 10th Panzer Division. Before the start of hostilities, the division had 864 serviceable trucks and tankers. Of these, 613 cars came across the Dnieper, to Piryatin. 71

percent! Why are you more? Nearly three-quarters of the original number of vehicles traveled at least 500 km (the report gives a figure as much as 3,000 km) from the border to the Dnieper - and this is on broken dirt roads, under enemy air strikes, without repair services and spare parts. Continuing the "mandatory Soviet set" of reasons for the defeat and loss of tanks, one would also have to add the phrase about "lack of fuel and lubricants", but this does not happen in nature, so we have to admit that there was gasoline for trucks. If out of 864 cars came to Pyryatin 613, then there were losses. Arithmetic gives us the figure 251, the report indicates the causes of losses for 293 vehicles. This inconsistency may be, in particular, due to the fact that in addition to trucks, the division also had dozens of cars. But let's not find fault with these unimportant particulars, something else is more important - what was the structure of car losses? *"210 vehicles were lost as a result of the battle. 34 cars were left with drivers surrounded by the enemy due to technical malfunctions and due to lack of fuel and lubricants, 2 cars were destroyed at the assembly point of emergency vehicles due to the inability to evacuate during the general withdrawal of the unit, 6 cars got stuck on obstacles due to the impossibility to evacuate them, and 41 cars were left when the unit left due to technical malfunctions and the impossibility of restoring them"* So, no more than 77 vehicles were lost due to technical malfunctions - **less than 9% of the total initial number**. This is simply an excellent indicator of technical reliability. What are these ultra-reliable and highly passable cars? The report also has an answer to this question: 503 GAZ-AA and 297 ZIS-5. "Lorry" GAZ-AA is a former

American Ford-A. Simple and cheap, "budget" truck. Simple and cheap for the early 20s, when it was developed and put into production. In the early 40s, it could already be placed in a technical museum. The front axle is on one spring, and even that is across the frame, the rear axle hangs on two stumps - half-springs, a cardan shaft without a cardan shaft, a carburetor without an air filter (just a hole for air intake, that's all). At a breakneck speed of 40 km / h, only a deep track could keep this car in a straight line. After two or three "walkers" from the collective farm current to the city elevator, the driver of the "lorry" with a sense of accomplishment put it in for repairs:

drag the crankshaft babbitt bearings, flush the "vacuum cleaner" carburetor, and so on. And this squalor was more reliable, maneuverable and protected from air attacks than armored tracked vehicles, some of which (BT-7, T-34) could be considered the best tanks in the world in terms of all indicators of mobility? Is it possible to draw far-reaching conclusions on the basis

of data on the losses of a single division? Of course not, so let's move on. 37th Panzer Division of the same 15th Mechanized Corps. The exact number of vehicles available at the start of hostilities is not indicated either in the report of the division commander, or in the report of the acting corps commander. There are only complaints that *"the motorized rifle regiment was completely lacking in vehicles."* On July 15, 1941, the division concentrated in Piryatin included: *"T-34 tanks - 1, BT-7 tanks - 5, BA-10 armored vehicles - 11, wheeled vehicles - 173."* One hundred and seventy-three cars. And 6 tanks out of 316. We take the report of the commander of the

32nd tank division of the 4th MK. Of the 420 vehicles of all types (passenger cars, trucks, special, tankers), 133 were lost. (63. pp. 189-192) 32% of the original number. Let me remind you that 269 out of 323 tanks were lost. 83% of the original number. As part of the 8th mechanized corps, judging

by the "Certificate of the head of the ABTU of the South-Western Front" dated July 17, 1941, 1,384 vehicles remained (41 cars, 864 GAZ-AA and 479 ZIS-5). If we compare this with the initial number of cars in the entire 8th MK (3,237 units), then "only" 44% of cars have been preserved. This figure will increase significantly if we take into account that one of the divisions of the corps (34th Panzer) with units of the 12th TD attached to it died surrounded in the Dubno region and left all its vehicles there.

18th Mechanized Corps of the Southern Front. Like other formations of the Southern Front, he entered into hostilities and was defeated a few weeks later than the mechanized corps of the South-Western Front. By the end of July, the 18th MK still existed. Only 43 BT tanks and 19 T-26 tanks remained in its arsenal, as well as 100 cars and 1,771 trucks and special vehicles, including 1,230 super-reliable GAZ-AA lorries.

Significantly more powerful before the start of the war was the 2nd mechanized corps of the Southern Front, which also managed to receive 60 new types of tanks (KV and T-34). As of August 1, the corps had 136 tanks (26% of its original strength) and 3,294 vehicles (87% of its original strength). (33. pp. 412, 415)

Now let's move on to the most generalized data. Why again turn to the most official source - the repeatedly cited monograph of the Russian General Staff "Secrecy removed." The compilers of this work did a good job. Fourteen pages list the losses of weapons and military equipment by years of war. Tanks - separately, guns - separately, 122-mm howitzers separately from 152-mm howitzers, etc. Moreover, the losses are expressed not only in absolute numbers, but also as a percentage of the "resource", i.e., the total amount of equipment available in the troops at the beginning of the period and received from industry (under Lend-Lease, from repairs). So, for the second half of 1941, the percentage of losses is monstrously high: 73% of tanks, 70% of anti-tank guns, 60% of 122-mm howitzers, 63% of 152-mm howitzers, 62% of light machine guns, 65% of heavy machine guns, 61% of mortars ... Although, it would seem, well, what can break in a mortar? The pipe - it is the pipe ... Against this gloomy background, two "bright spots" are striking: guns of large and extra large caliber (203 mm or more) and ... cars. (2, pp. 352–363) The very low (9.1%) casualty figures

for heavy artillery of the RGK are a typical example of what is called "the exception that proves the rule." Of course, mortars (machine guns, cannons) did not break. They "remained in the territory occupied by the enemy." Heavy artillery (and it really was heavy, from 17 to 45 tons) did not "remain", since in the very first days of the war it was withdrawn from the territory of the western military districts to the deep rear. Marshal of Artillery N. D. Yakovlev (head of the GAU during the war years) recalls: *"The most important event, which I am proud of to this day, was the*

categorical order of the Headquarters adopted on my recommendation to withdraw all artillery of large and special power to the rear. Moreover, the withdrawal is immediate, without reference to the difficult situation of the first days of the war. Therefore, no matter how

our glorious gunners were indignant, eager to bring down their heavy shells on the enemy, they still had to load into echelons and take the guns to the east ... All guns of 203 and 280 mm caliber, as well as 152-mm long-range guns (only a few were lost) from the cadres ended up in the rear in time ... ” (90, p. 92) It is difficult to say whether we should be proud of such a decision,

but it was made, and out of 1,018 heavy guns, no more than a hundred were lost. But for what reason were the record low (33% of the resource) car losses? How can this be? Primitive "one and a half" and slightly superior ZISs turned out to be

twice as reliable and durable as a mortar? Plywood cabins turned out to be stronger than tank armored hulls? And was there gasoline for a timely departure from the “territory occupied by the enemy”? After all, a car is not a horse, and even more so not a Red Army soldier - no matter how much you “press on consciousness”, it won’t even move without fuel ... But maybe we just don’t understand something important? Maybe there is some unknown law of war, according to which the combat survivability of plywood vehicles is higher than the survivability of armored tanks?

These doubts haunted me until I opened Reinhardt's well-known monograph "Turn near Moscow". (88, p. 381) At the end of the book of the "beaten Hitler general" there is a plate with numbers of losses of weapons and military equipment (including cars) of the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front in 1941. And the last doubts disappeared. Miracles do not happen - **the loss of cars in the warring army is ten times greater than the losses**

tanks:

	танки	автомобили	к-
Красная Армия	20 500	159 тыс	8
Вермахт	2 831	116 тыс.	41

The difference in numbers is striking. We are not yet discussing the issue that the losses of the retreating Red Army are greater than the losses of the advancing Wehrmacht. Many “objective” reasons can be found or invented for this. But in the Wehrmacht, there are 41 vehicles for one lost tank, and in the Red Army - only 8. And this is all - on average for

the second half of the 41st year. But in the Red Army (unlike the Wehrmacht) the tanks "ended" much earlier, so this assessment greatly distorts the real picture. If we consider the structure of losses of the mechanized corps of the Southwestern Front for the first three weeks of the war (while the tanks were still available), then the number of lost vehicles and tanks is almost equal there, or even more tanks were lost in absolute numbers than cars! Just as eloquent is the ratio of losses of mortars and

vehicles in the two armies. The Wehrmacht loses only 17 mortars per 1,000 vehicles lost, while the Red Army loses 116 mortars per 1,000.

	82-мм миномёты	автомобили	к-
Красная Армия	18 500	159 тыс.	9
Вермахт	1 974	116 тыс.	59

Everything is very simple. Wehrmacht is fighting. Yes, he fights for the sake of plundering foreign land, fulfilling the criminal will of the inhuman regime. But the German army is fighting, and therefore, first of all, it saves its tanks and mortars.

And with cars - how it will turn out. That is why they have "Opels", "Daimlers" and "Mercedes" and break 59 times more often than mortar tubes - which is completely logical and technically justified. From the very first hours of the war, the Red Army turns into a crowd of armed refugees. And for the demoralized, panic-stricken crowd, tanks - guns, machine guns - mortars are a burden. Therefore, they are in a hurry to get rid of them under any pretext. And the truck - even the weakest one - is protected. As a result, two-thirds of the antediluvian "gaziks" in the Red Army survived, and two-thirds of the mortar tubes broke and were lost ...

Chapter

17 The Price of Defeat

Having finished with the discussion of very important details (such as the volume and structure of losses of tanks and vehicles in the mechanized corps of the Red Army), we now turn to the most general quantitative parameters of the events of the first weeks and months

of the war. The task assigned to the Wehrmacht according to the plan "Barbarossa" ("the main forces of *the Russian ground forces located in Western Russia must be destroyed in bold operations by deep, rapid advancement of tank wedges ...*") was already completed **by mid-July 1941**. The Baltic and Western military districts (more than 70 divisions) were defeated, thrown back **350-450 km** east of the border, scattered through the forests or taken prisoner. A little later, the same thing happened with the new 60 divisions introduced into the North-Western and Western Fronts from June 22 to July 9. (2, pp. 162-163) The enemy occupied Lithuania, Latvia, almost all of Belarus, crossed the Bug, Neman, Western Dvina, Berezina and Dnieper. July 9, the Germans occupied Pskov, July 16 - Smolensk. Two-thirds of the distance from the western border to Leningrad and Moscow was covered in less than a month. The troops of the South-Western Front in disorder retreated beyond the line of the old Soviet-Polish border, in mid-July 1941, the Wehrmacht tank units occupied Zhitomir and Berdichev, went to the suburbs of Kyiv.

Almost all the equipment and heavy weapons of the troops of the western districts were lost. By July 6-9, the troops of the North-Western, Western and South-Western fronts lost **11.7 thousand tanks, 19 thousand guns and mortars, more than 1 million small arms**. (2. p. 368). Particularly heavy, almost irreparable losses were suffered by tank troops. Already on July 15, 1941, the remnants of the mechanized corps were officially disbanded. What Soviet

historians modestly called "the failure of the frontier battle" meant in fact the defeat of the First Strategic Echelon of the Red Army (the number of divisions surpassed any army in Europe, and the number of tanks

superior to all of them put together). By July 10–15, 1941, the Germans occupied (more precisely, passed) an area of 709 thousand square meters. km, which is about **3 times** the territory of Poland occupied by the Wehrmacht in September 1939, and **6 times** the territory of Belgium, the Netherlands and a patch of northern France captured by the Wehrmacht in May 1940.

On comparing the events of May 40th and June 41st, it is probably worth dwelling in a little more detail. For decades, Soviet historical propaganda spread rumors about the "triumphal march", which the Wehrmacht allegedly marched through "defeated France". Recently, the sounds of this "march" are getting louder and more and more often heard from the pages of the latest publications. It is understandable - after the scale of the catastrophic defeat of the Red Army became known to the general public, the authors of a certain political orientation had a great desire to portray the defeat of the French army in the brightest colors. Here, for example, is how the notorious Mr. A. Isaev begins the chapter "Discussion", in which he is going to sum up the results of the battle in Western Ukraine. He quotes, in the most positive sense, without condemnation or even irony, the work of a certain German historian who had the stupidity to write the following in 1958:

"The first

ten days of the campaign have passed. After 10 days in France, German tanks, dispersing the cowardly French and British, traveled 800 km and stood off the coast of the Atlantic. During the first 10 days of the "campaign to the East", only 100 km were covered in a straight

line ... " (33, p. 230) The reader who has an old school atlas or globe on a stand at home will understand why I used such an unparliamentary expression. In France, there are simply no such distances (from Sedan to the Atlantic coast 600 km in a straight line), the Wehrmacht in May 1940 was advancing not to the west, to the Atlantic, but to the north-west, to the English Channel, to the shores of which in the Boulogne-Calais region advanced tank formations

left on May 23, 1940. It was, of course, a brilliant success, but still 350 km in 14 days is not 800 km in 10. In order to determine where the German tank divisions were on the 14th day of the "campaign to the East", let us turn to the textbook "Military Diary" by F. Halder. IN

The estimates and conclusions of the "beaten Hitler general" were often and very mistaken, but the Wehrmacht General Staff Chief still knew the location of his troops:

"July 5, 1941, the 14th day of the

war. Situation: In all sectors of the front,

advancement is noted in accordance with plans ... On the front of Army Group Center, the right wing of Guderian's tank group held a bridgehead (on the Dnieper River) in the Rogachev area (450 km to the nearest point on the border). The main forces of Guderian's tank group are slowly advancing, fighting stubborn battles between the Berezina and the Dnieper. In addition to Drissa, the Gotha tank group also crossed the Western Dvina above Polotsk in the Ulla region (425 km) and entrenched itself on the northern bank of the river ... On the front of Army Group North, Göpner's tank group is successfully advancing and approaching Ostrov with its left flank (470 km) ... July 7, the 16th day of the war ... At the front of the Army Group "South" our troops broke through the central section of the enemy's defensive line. The 11th Panzer

Division broke through east

of Polochnoe (260 km) and is now making its way to Berdichev among the columns of the retreating troops. The 16th Panzer Division is in the Russian Starokonstantinov (250 km). The 9th Panzer Division is currently participating in a large tank battle in the Proskurov area (280 km) ... " So if we talk about the pace of the the Army "march", then in May 40 it was generally lower than the rate of attack of Groups "North" and Center in the first 20 days of the war on the Eastern Front. In this case, the width of the offensive front should also be taken into account. The fighting in May 1940

took place on the "patch" of Normandy and Flanders, with maximum distances of 300 km along the front and 350 km in depth. In terms of area, this territory approximately corresponds to the size of Lithuania, which one of the three, the smallest, Army Group North occupied in one week of June 1941. Now let's look at the situation in the first weeks of the war from the other side. What losses did the Wehrmacht inflict, "dispersing the cowardly French" and overcoming the "fierce resistance" of the Red Army?

In the well-known monograph by Tippleskirch, the following figures are given for the losses of the Wehrmacht in the French campaign: 27 thousand killed, 18.4 thousand.

missing, 111 thousand wounded, total - **156 thousand** people. (29)

According to the updated data presented in the equally textbook work of Müller-Hillebrand, the death toll was 49 thousand people, which is even slightly more than the total number of irretrievable losses indicated by Tippelskirch. In the diary of F. Halder, comparable

figures for the total (killed, missing, wounded) losses of the Wehrmacht on the Eastern Front appear only at the end of July 1941. If we translate Halder's data into a more familiar form for us (combining the losses of soldiers and officers), we get the following: - 102,588 people (not counting the sick) by July 16; -

179,500 (including: Army Group North - 42

thousand, Army Group Center - 74.5 thousand, Army Group South - 63 thousand) people by the end of July (entry dated August 2); - 213,301 by July 31 (entry dated

August 4). At the end of July 1941, the

Wehrmacht advanced on a gigantic front from Narva to Chisinau (1,450 km in a straight line), behind the attackers there was already a territory that was an order of magnitude larger than the battle zone of the French campaign, the losses of the Red Army by that time were many times higher than the number of troops of the Western Allies defeated in May - early June 1940. With this in mind, it would hardly be appropriate to compare German losses according to the "calendar principle": 35-40 days in the West (on June 12, Paris was declared an "open city", on June 17, the Pétain government requested a truce) and 40 days in the East. A comparison built on the principle of "price - result" will be much more correct. According to the chronology generally accepted in Russian historiography, the "border battle", that is, the defeat of the troops of the western border districts (Baltic, Western and Kyiv), is limited to June 22 - July 9. Already at the stage of this "border battle", the result achieved by the German troops (the number of defeated enemy troops, the depth of the offensive, the captured trophies) exceeded all the military (not to be confused with geopolitical) achievements of the French campaign. The losses of the Wehrmacht at this point were expressed in the following figures:

- **64,132** (19,789 killed and missing, 44,343 wounded) by July 6, 1941 (entry dated July 10);

- **92,120** by July 13, 1941 (entry dated July 17).

Thus, the losses of Wehrmacht personnel (both general and irrevocable) during the "triumphant march across France" were **2–2.5 times greater** than the losses on the Eastern Front by July 6–13, 1941. Now we can only compare the size of the grouping of Soviet and Anglo-French troops. On June 22, the troops of the four border districts (Baltic, Western, Kiev, Odessa) had 149 divisions (7 cavalry divisions and 12 airborne brigades were counted by us as 7 "calculated divisions"). In addition, by June 22, at least 16 divisions of the second strategic echelon were already concentrated in the territory of the western districts. Thus, by the beginning of hostilities, the Red Army had **165 divisions in the western theater of operations**, including 40 tank and 20 motorized, 10 anti-tank artillery brigades. The forces of the Western allies in the writings of Soviet historians were traditionally estimated at 135 divisions. And this is the absolute truth. If we sum up all the formations that in principle existed (in North Africa, in the Middle East, on the border with Italy in the Alps, in the Maginot Line garrisons, in training centers), and add to them the armies of Belgium and Holland in full force, then 135 "calculated divisions" can be counted. And if Chamberlain and Deladier were properly preparing for war, and if all these settlement units were armed and concentrated on the border with Germany, then everything would be different. In reality, only those divisions that were in the theater of operations and were put into battle in the period from May 10 to June 10 inflicted losses on the German troops. These are: - 28 divisions in the 7th, 1st, 9th and 2nd French armies; - 9 British divisions; - 14 reserve

divisions deployed in the area of Châlons-sur-Marne, Saint-Quentin. (29, 55, 57)

Total - **51 divisions**, including 3 tank divisions, including 11 infantry divisions,

formed in early September 1939 from completely untrained recruits. Theoretically, 22 Belgian and 10 Dutch divisions can also be taken into account, although their armament, training and equipment could not be compared with the personnel divisions of the Red Army. It was with such forces that the Western allies inflicted damage on the Germans, **twice the losses of the Wehrmacht in the "border battle" on the Eastern Front.**

Noteworthy is the ratio of losses of German tanks on the Western and Eastern fronts: (10, 31)

	Pz-II	Pz-35/ 38(t)	Pz-III	Pz-III	Pz.Bef	Всего
Потери во Франции (май-июнь 1940 г.)	240	99	135	97	69	640
Восточный фронт (к концу июля 1941 г.)	97	140	153	96	17	503
Восточный фронт (к 4 - 10 сентября 1941 г.)	152	231	252	125	38	798

With such losses, *"German tanks dispersed the cowardly French and British in front of them."* Particularly impressive are the almost equal losses of medium German tanks (Pz-III and Pz-IV on the Western and Eastern fronts - and this despite the fact that the main weapon of the French anti-tank gun was the 25-mm "Marianne" of the Hotchkiss company, and the anti-tank weapons of the Red Army began from 45-mm cannons in rifle divisions and ended with 76-mm and 85-mm cannons in the PTABRs. We did not take into account the losses of Pz-I machine-gun tankettes here. Firstly, because it is not a tank, and secondly, because that their huge losses in France (182 units) will make the comparison of losses even more surreal.

It is necessary to at least briefly mention the results of the war in the air. During the first three weeks of the war on the Western Front (from May 10 to May 31, 1940), the irretrievable losses of the Luftwaffe (aircraft of all types) amounted to **978** aircraft. During the first three weeks of the war on the Eastern Front (from June 22 to July 12, 1941), the irretrievable losses of the Luftwaffe (aircraft of all types) amounted to **550** aircraft (according to a simple summation of the weekly reports of the Luftwaffe headquarters - **473** aircraft). That is, two times less than in the skies of Normandy and Flanders. In general, during the entire campaign in the West (from May 10 to June 24), the Luftwaffe irretrievably lost **1,401** aircraft on the Western Front. The losses of the flight personnel (namely, flight personnel, and not ground personnel and anti-aircraft gunners) of the Luftwaffe amounted to 4,417 people (1,092 killed, 1,395 wounded, 1,930 missing). (31) For a comparable period of time (from June 22 to August 2, 1941), the irretrievable losses of German aviation on the Eastern Front amounted to **968** aircraft. (59) Thus, in any of

In the considered time intervals, **the losses of the Luftwaffe on the Western Front were higher than on the Eastern**

Front. During that period (May 1940), when French aviation and British fighters based in France (about 700-750 pilots) still had the opportunity for organized resistance, German losses were 2 times more **than** in the first three weeks of hostilities in the East . It remains only to recall that the Air Force of the western districts had 3.6 thousand fighter pilots (almost five times more than the allies) and the composition of the Soviet aviation group was constantly increasing.

With all this, the May battles in France are by no means an example of a successfully carried out defensive operation. None of the French politicians, historians, writers have yet guessed to call this disgrace "the great patriotic war of the French people." On the contrary, the words "May 1940" became for France a synonym for catastrophe and the greatest national humiliation. *"The shocked nation was in a daze, the army did not believe in anything and did not hope for anything, and the state machine was spinning in an atmosphere of complete chaos,"* Charles de Gaulle describes May 1940 in his memoirs. (55) Churchill recalls how on the morning of May 15, 1940, he was awakened by a telephone call - the head of the French government, P. Reynaud, at the beginning of the sixth day of the war, was in a hurry to inform him that "everything was lost ...". And the losses that the French, English, Belgian, Dutch soldiers were able to inflict then on the Wehrmacht, this is the minimum minimorum that turned out to be achievable in the conditions of general chaos, panic

and paralysis of the will of the country's top leadership ... Now let's return to the events of the summer of 1941 and compare the total losses of Wehrmacht personnel (**64 thousand** people) with the losses of the Red Army in the "border battle". The troops of the North-Western, Western and South-Western fronts in the period from June 22 to July 6-9 lost **749 thousand** people killed, wounded and missing. (2, pp. 162-164) This figure does not include the losses of units and formations of the Second Strategic Echelon, which took part in the hostilities in early July, does not include the losses of the Northern Front (Leningrad MD) and the Southern Front (Odessa MD), which began active hostilities, respectively, on June 29 and July 2. This figure is undoubtedly an under

concerns the losses of the North-Western Front. On page 162 of Krivosheev's statistical collection (from which the above-mentioned loss figure was taken) it is reported that the troops of the North-Western Front (the number of which by the beginning of hostilities was determined by the compilers at 440 thousand people) from June 22 to July 9 during the "Defensive Operation in Lithuania and Latvia" lost 87,203 people killed, wounded and missing, i.e. 20% of the original number. Could this be true? Of course not. All the documents, memoirs, and studies at our disposal testify with absolute unanimity that the front was defeated. Ruined to the ground. Most of the divisions of the front left numbers and 1-2 thousand personnel (*"... the state of the units of the 8th Army is characterized by the following data: the 10th rifle division; the 98th rifle regiment is almost completely destroyed; 30 of the 204th rifle regiment remained the 30th artillery regiment has one gun, the 140th howitzer artillery regiment of 36 guns lost 21 rifle division. Data on the status of the remaining parts of the army were not received ... "*). (50, p. 112) How, finally, can the reported loss of **87,000 people** be combined with the loss of **341,000** small arms over the same period? (2, p. 368) But even without taking into account all these strange discrepancies, the losses of the advancing (and very successfully, 20–30 km per day of the advancing) Wehrmacht and the defending Red Army are 1 to 12. This is a "miracle" that does not fit in any canons of military science. According to

sound logic - and throughout the practice of wars and armed conflicts - the losses of the attacker should be greater than the losses of the defender. The ratio of losses of 1 to 12 is possible only in the case when the white colonialists, who sailed to Africa with cannons and guns, attack the natives, defending themselves with spears and hoes. But in the summer of 1941, the situation on the western borders of the USSR was completely different: the defending side was not inferior to the enemy either in numbers or in weapons, and significantly outnumbered him in the means of delivering a powerful counterattack - tanks and aircraft, and even

and had the opportunity to build its defense on a system of powerful natural barriers and long-term defensive structures. No less eloquent are the figures characterizing the ratio of military equipment losses. As noted above, by July 9, the Red Army had lost 11.7 thousand tanks, and the irretrievable losses of Wehrmacht tank divisions by the end of July 1941 amounted to 503 tanks. To this figure should be added the loss of 21 Stug III "assault guns". You can add on the loss of 92 Pz-I tankettes. Even with this approach, the ratio of irretrievable losses of tanks of the sides is 1 to 19. The ratio of losses of artillery and small arms is just as indicative. At the end of 1941, the losses of the parties were characterized by the following figures: (2, pp. 351–355, 88, p. 381)

	Германия	СССР	соотношение
орудия калибра 150/152мм	856	4 700	1 к 5,5
гаубицы калибра 105/122 мм	1 103	6 000	1 к 5,4
пушки калибра 75/76 мм	919	12 300	1 к 13,4
миномёты калибра 81/82 мм	1 974	18 500	1 к 9,4
миномёты калибра 50 мм	3 162	38 000	1 к 12,0
пушки ПТО калибра 37/45 мм	3 349	12 000	1 к 3,6
пулемёты ручные и станковые	21 062	189 400	1 к 9,0

Let us now compare the losses of the Wehrmacht with its own strength. To do this, let us again turn to the "War Diary" of the Chief of the General Staff of the

Wehrmacht: - entry dated July 3: *"from June 22 to June 30, our losses amount a total of 41,087 people = 1.64% of the available staff ... "*;

- entry dated July 6: *"on 3.07, a total of about 54,000 people were lost = 2.15% of 2.5 million. A very significant number of patients is noteworthy, which is almost 54,000, that is, almost equal to combat losses ... "*; - entry dated July 17: *"from 22.6 to*

13.7, a total of 92,120 were out of action people, which is 3.68% of the total number of troops ... " (12)

So, by mid-July 1941, the losses of the Wehrmacht are **less than 4% of the total**. These are certainly not small, but very small losses. Even for those who did not graduate from the military academy, it should be clear that the army, which had to overcome the "stubborn resistance of the enemy", suffers completely different losses. Let us explain this with two concrete examples.

Operation "Bagration" (the defeat of German troops in Belarus in the summer of 1944). The size of the grouping of Soviet troops: 156 rifle and 12 cavalry divisions, 2 rifle, 18 tank and mechanized brigades, 2,332 thousand personnel. The strength of the enemy grouping (3rd tank, 4th, 9th, 2nd field armies of the Wehrmacht): 45 divisions, 442 thousand people. (72, p. 305) Despite the overwhelming numerical superiority of the Red Army, its losses amounted to **33%** of the total number of the group (179 thousand killed and missing, 587 thousand wounded and sick). (2, p. 203) Lviv-Sandomierz operation (liberation of Western

Ukraine in the summer of 1944). The losses of the Red Army (65 thousand killed and missing, 224 thousand wounded and sick) amounted to **29%** of the initial strength of the group (72 rifle and 6 cavalry divisions, 7 tank and 3 mechanized corps, 4 separate tank brigades, 1 million troops). personnel person). (2, p. 205)

In general, during the liberation of the Baltic States, Belarus, the western regions of Ukraine, Moldova (in Russian historiography, this is called the Baltic, Belarusian, Lvov-Sandomierz and Iasi-Kishinev strategic offensive operations), the Red Army lost 1,400 thousand people (318 thousand killed and **missing** without news, 1,084 thousand wounded and sick). Let us clarify that here the losses of the Red Army in two more operations to liberate Western Ukraine are not taken into account: Rivne-Lutsk and Proskurovo-Chernivtsi, for which the author does not have data. Comparing these terrible figures with the losses suffered by the Wehrmacht during the occupation of the same territories in June - early July 1941, we find that in 1944 the total losses of the advancing Red Army turned out to be 15-20 times more than the losses of the advancing Red Army in the summer of **1941** . on the same enemy terrain.

Everything is relative. It makes sense to compare the loss of weapons of the Red Army in 1941 with losses in other periods of the war. Let's start with the simplest and most important thing - with a rifle. On page 367 of the statistical collection "Secret Classified Removed", which we have repeatedly mentioned, it is written that in 1941 the Red Army lost **6,290,000 small arms**. Strictly speaking, **this figure alone gives an exhaustive answer to the question of what happened to the Red Army in 1941**. The most common type of small arms was the Mosin three-line rifle. This weapon was and remains an unsurpassed example of reliability and durability. The "three-ruler" could be drowned in a swamp, buried in sand, dropped into salty sea water - and she kept shooting and shooting. The weight of this true masterpiece of engineering is 3.5 kg without cartridges. This means that any young and healthy man (namely, these were the Red Army in the summer of 1941) could carry 3-4 rifles from the battlefield without much effort. And even the most seedy collective farm mare, harnessed to a simple peasant cart, could take a hundred "three-rulers" left over from the dead and wounded soldiers to the rear. And further. Rifles "just like that" are not handed out. Each has its own individual number, each is issued personally and against signature. Everyone, even the "youngest" first year, was explained that he would go to court for the loss of personal weapons. How then could six million rifles and machine guns have disappeared? Let's not simplify. In war, as in war. Doesn't always work out

collect all the rifles on the battlefield to the last.

Not every truck and not every wagon with weapons in a combat situation reaches its destination. Finally, a certain number of rifles and machine guns could actually be damaged by fire, explosion, polar cold. Is it possible to tentatively estimate the size of the "normal" for the Red Army (in the Wehrmacht they were disproportionately smaller) losses of small arms? Of course you can. After working for several minutes with a calculator and the same collection "Secrecy Removed", we find out that in the 44-45s, one million soldiers "lost" 36,000 small arms per month. Consequently, for the six months of 1941, "normal" losses should not have exceeded 650-700 thousand units. Actually

lost - 6.3 million. There is an "excessive" loss of more than **5.6 million** small arms. Just as "abnormal" were

the losses of other types of weapons. So, in six months of 1941, 24,400 field artillery guns were lost (this figure did not include anti-tank guns and mortars), which amounted to 56% of the total resource. And in 12 months of 1943, 5,700 guns were lost (9.7% of the resource). Thus, the "average monthly" losses in 1941 turned out to be **8.5 times greater** than in the year 1943. Even more revealing are the proportions of losses of anti-tank defense guns. As of June 22, 1941, there were 149,000 anti-tank guns in the Red Army (in fact, even more, since the compilers of the collection "Secrecy Removed" for some reason did not take into account the 76-mm and 85-mm guns that were on armament of PTABs). In addition to this colossal number (5 guns against one German tank), in the six months of 1941, Soviet industry transferred another 2,500 anti-tank guns to the troops. In total - a total resource of 17,400 units, of which 70% (12,100 guns) were lost. And for the whole of 1943 - for all of its 12 months - 5,500 anti-tank guns were lost, which amounted to only 14.6% of the total resource of the 43rd year. As an example for comparison, 1943 was not chosen by chance. This is the year of grandiose tank battles on the Kursk Bulge, this is the year when the Germans began mass production of heavy tanks "tiger" and "panther", against which our "forty-five" (namely, they still accounted for 95% of the total resource of 1943) were almost helpless. And yet, in 1943, the Red Army was losing 460 guns a month, and in 1941, at a time when two of the three German tanks on the Eastern Front were light vehicles with bulletproof armor, 2,000 a month. **4.5 times more.** But this is also a completely wrong calculation. There was no "uniform" loss of two thousand guns every month - there was a massive loss of most of the entire anti-tank weapons in the first weeks of the war. Things got to the point that already on July 5, 1941, signed by N. Vatutin, the "Instruction for Combating Enemy Tanks" was issued, which prescribed *"preparing mud-clay, which is thrown into the viewing slots of the tank."* (50, p. 142)

Mud-clay to fight tanks. Two weeks after the start of the war. In a country that, with the frenzied persistence of a totalitarian despotism, was preparing for war, accumulating mountains of weapons...

Chapter 18

THE MOST IMPORTANT CHAPTER

Fans of old, solid science fiction literature, of course, remember the novel by Stanislaw Lem "Invincible". For those who have not had time to read it yet, let me remind you a brief summary. A search and rescue team on the Invincible spacecraft is sent to search for another space expedition that has disappeared without a trace on some distant planet Regis. Arriving at Regis, the rescuers quickly find both the ship and the bodies of the dead earthlings. Just as quickly and easily, doctors and biochemists determine the immediate cause of death. The reason is banal and precisely because of this it is especially terrible - hunger. No traces of poisoning, no radiation, no signs of violence - all the crew members of the lost expedition died of starvation. Next to refrigerators crammed with food, on a ship with a properly functioning power plant, communications equipment, protective lasers, blasters and other marvels of technology. A thorough examination of the ship does not clarify the underlying cause of the death of people, but only increases the number of gloomy mysteries: a log book covered in children's scribbles, pieces of soap with teeth marks, books torn to shreds ... Only at the cost of enormous efforts, having lost some of their people, the team of the Invincible will find out finally the truth. It turns out that the planet was captured by some kind of biomechanical "cloud". It had the ability to generate impulses of a super-powerful magnetic field, thereby erasing all knowledge, skills and abilities from the memory of living beings. It was this fate that befell the members of the lost expedition. Having lost their minds, they turned into helpless babies, unable to either make a distress call or get food from the refrigerator. The dark fantasy created by Stanislaw Lem's imagination is an accurate metaphor for

what happened to the Red Army in the summer of 1941. The largest land army in the world turned out to be equally incapable of either defense or offensive. Neither multiple numerical superiority in aviation, nor multiple

numerical (with significant technical) superiority in tanks, not two lines of reinforced concrete pillboxes helped prevent an unprecedented rout. The main strike force of the Red Army - huge mechanized corps armed with the best T-34 and KV tanks in the world - simply melted away, disappeared, leaving behind piles of abandoned tanks and armored vehicles that blocked all the roads of Lithuania, Belarus and Western Ukraine. The Germans passed through most of the fortified areas of the "Molotov Line" and "Stalin Line", without even paying attention to the gray concrete boxes of the pillboxes that were empty during the stampede. Through others, they broke through with battles, however, lasting no more than two or three days (we are talking specifically about breaking through the front of the fortified area as such - the heroic garrisons of individual pillboxes of Grodno, Brest, Rava-Russian and other URs fought in full encirclement until 27-30 June 1941).

True, the German command soon had to learn that the surrounded and defeated armies of the four western districts (Baltic, Western, Kiev and Odessa) were only part of the "*main forces of the Russian ground forces*." And in place of the broken divisions from the depths of the vast country, more and more new formations approached. By July 10-15, the redeployment of troops of the second strategic echelon (16th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 24th and 28th Armies) to the theater was basically completed. In mid-July, in spite of the huge losses of the first weeks of the war, there were already about **234 divisions** in the active army . (3, p. 105) By the end of July 1941, the 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 43rd, 49th Armies were formed. In total, during the two-month battle of Smolensk, 104 divisions and 33 brigades were put into battle. (21) In a comparable period of time (an entry in F. Halder's "War Diary" dated August 2), all Wehrmacht formations on the Eastern Front received only 47,000 reinforcements. This corresponds to 3 "calculated divisions".

In total, until December 1, 1941, the Headquarters sent **150 divisions and 44 rifle brigades to the western strategic direction**, and another **140 divisions and 50 rifle brigades** to the Leningrad and Kiev directions . (21)

But in addition to rifle (infantry) formations, cavalry, tank, artillery brigades and divisions were also formed. A. Isaev reports, unfortunately - without indicating the source, that "*up to 31*

December, 483 rifle, 73 tank, 31 motorized, 101 cavalry divisions and 266 tank, rifle and ski brigades were formed or reorganized. (33, p. 655) In addition, dozens and hundreds of already existing formations were continuously replenished with personnel. In total, by the end of 1941, **2,250 thousand** marching reinforcements were sent to the troops. (3, p. 149) At the same time, until December 31, 1941, the German Army Group Center received only **192 thousand** people to make up for the growing losses. In total, from June 22 to the start of the battle for Moscow, only two new tank divisions (2nd and 5th) and **24 infantry** divisions from the reserve of the Wehrmacht high command appeared on the Eastern Front. The reason why the

Red Army increased its numbers in volumes completely inaccessible to the enemy is extremely simple. The number of divisions that the Wehrmacht was able to concentrate on the borders of the Soviet Union represented the maximum that Germany of 80 million could achieve in the second year after the start of general mobilization. There was almost nothing to add to this "maximum". On the other hand, one and a half hundred divisions of the First Strategic Echelon, which the Red Army concentrated on the front by mid-June 1941, represented the minimum that the 200-million-strong Soviet Union was able to form and push to the border as part of a covert, secret mobilization, even BEFORE announcement of open general mobilization. On June 23, 1941, open mobilization began, and by July 1, **5.3 million people** were drafted into the ranks of the Armed Forces (which meant a **doubling** of the total number of military personnel compared to June 22). But on July 1, the mobilization, of course, did not end. She was just getting started. At the first stage (according to the Decree of June 22, 1941), 14 ages were called up for military service, the total number of which amounted to **10 million people**. At the second stage (according to GKO resolution No. 459 of August 11, 1941), older conscripts (born 1895–1904) were called up. As a result, by the end of 1941, **a total of 14 million people were mobilized** (3, p. 110). new connections. And all this

countless armies were defeated, surrounded and captured in new "cauldrons" - near Smolensk and Roslavl, Uman and Kyiv, Vyazma and Bryansk. By the beginning of winter, the Germans captured Kharkov and Odessa,

Taganrog and Crimea, went to Moscow and Tikhvin. Forgetting for a moment that we are talking about the suffering and death of millions of people, about the ruin of the country and the transformation of thousands of cities and villages into charred ruins, forgetting about all this and arguing with cynical composure, we are forced to state that in the 41st year the Soviet the military machine worked with exceptionally low, record low efficiency. Without solving any of the assigned tasks, having given the enemy vast territories, the Red Army suffered gigantic losses, in a number of positions - dozens of times greater than the losses of the enemy. On the other hand, the losses of a small (in comparison with the human resources used by the command of the Red Army) and having no significant superiority in weapons technology (and clearly inferior in some types of military equipment) enemy turned out to be ten times less than those that in a few years will be borne by the Red Army, returning in many years of battles lost in a few months of 1941. In a comparable time frame, even a weak, poorly armed and demoralized army and French aviation inflicted on the Germans in May-June 1940 greater losses than those that the Red Army could inflict on the enemy in the summer of 1941.

These are the facts. These facts are reliable, there are too many of them, and they require some kind of rational, logical explanation. The previously proposed explanations ("surpriseness of the attack", "multiple numerical superiority of the enemy", "hopelessly obsolete military equipment of the Red Army") either do not correspond to reality (in other words, they are false), or are insufficient to explain a military catastrophe of this magnitude. The enormous work carried out by Russian historians over the past two decades, in which the course of most battles of the initial period of the war was studied in detail, the strategic and operational decisions taken by the Red Army command were critically analyzed, only confirms - in my opinion - the conclusion about

that the answer to the question about the causes of the catastrophe of 1941 lies outside the sphere of problems of operational art or weapons technology.

I believe that in the most concise formulation, the answer to the question about the reason for the defeat can be reduced to three words: **THE ARMY DID NOT FIGHT**. On the battlefields of 1941, not two armies met, but the armed forces of Nazi Germany, organized and working like a well-oiled clockwork, on the one hand, and an almost uncontrollable armed crowd, on the other. It is this assumption that immediately makes it possible to rationally and adequately explain the "incredible" proportions of the losses of the parties: of course, in an armed clash between the army and the crowd, the losses of the crowd should be ten times greater. Of course, even a huge number of the best tanks - planes - cannons - machine guns will not greatly increase the real combat capability of an uncontrollable crowd. The simplicity of the proposed definition is deceptive. On the one hand, it "pushes" a caricature-

absurd explanation of a military catastrophe on an unprecedented scale as a consequence of the imaginary "lack of radio communications" and wires cut by saboteurs. In this regard, I will repeat once again what was said earlier - communication is provided not by wires, but by people. The notorious "lack of communication" was not a cause, but only an inevitable consequence of the transformation of a multimillion-strong army into an armed mob. The command was gone, the headquarters were gone, all discipline was gone - and **as a result, an integral part of this disintegration**, communication was lost, among other things. - **163 division (brigade) commanders. - 221 chief of staff of the division (brigade). - 1,114 regimental commanders.** This is a list of commanders of

the Ground Forces (i.e., excluding aviation commanders who did not return from a sortie) who went missing during all the years

of the war. (2, p. 319) Taking into account that the staff of one rifle division required one commander, one chief of staff and five regimental commanders, we come to the conclusion that an officer corps was missing, more than sufficient in number to fully staff the senior commanders of all divisions of the five western military districts of the USSR. It is worth noting that even by the beginning of the 90s there were no

the burial places of 44 generals of the Red Army are known (and this does not count those who were shot or died in prisons and camps, not counting those who died in enemy captivity). Forty-four generals - among them two dozen commanders of a corps or even an army level - disappeared without a trace in the abyss of war. (65) How can this be? How could a general, a division or corps commander go missing? This question is quite justified - commanders do not fight alone. The command and headquarters of the division had a strength (according to the state of April 1941) of 75 people (not counting the personnel of the political department, the tribunal and the commandant's platoon). There are even more people in the headquarters structures of the corps and the army. To what extent did chaos, panic, disorganization and the loss of any traces of military discipline have to reach, so that the commander of a corps or division "disappeared" without sign or trace?

On the other hand, the proposed definition ("the army did not fight") does not reveal the mechanism of the rapid disintegration of the Red Army. And although many of the above facts (I emphasize - facts, not quotes, opinions, stories) already give a completely unambiguous "hint", we have the opportunity to establish the truth without resorting to any guesswork at all. All that is required is to once again open the completely official statistical collection "The Classification Removed". It is extremely clearly written where and how the Red Army disappeared. On pages 234-246 of this

collection, data are given on the losses of active fronts in 1941. The uniqueness of these pages is that the numbers (I ask you, dear reader, to forget for a while about the tragedy behind these numbers, and focus on simple and pure arithmetic) of those killed and missing are not combined into a single array with the help of a crafty letter "and" and are shown separately. Moreover, it is written in plain text: "missing, captured, non-combat losses." Moreover, on page 338, the compilers of the collection were not even afraid to say so directly that out of 4,559 thousand people recorded in headquarters reports as "missing", 4,059 thousand people (i.e. 89%) **were** in captivity. Taking into account these explanations, let's summarize the available information in the next table:

	Общие потери, тыс. чел. / %%	Убитые, %%	Санитарные потери, %%	Пропало без вести небоевые и проч. %%
Северный фронт	148/100	15,1	42,4	42,6
Северо-Западный фронт	270/100	11,7	32,5	55,8
Западный Фронт	1 298 / 100	8,2	26,3	65,4
Юго-Западный фронт	852 / 100	7,1	15,7	77,2
Южный фронт	312 / 100	10,4	23,6	66,0
Центральный фронт	143 / 100	6,4	22,4	71,2
Брянский фронт	198 / 100	7,2	21,5	71,3

As we can see, with the exception of the northern flank of the war (Northern and Northwestern fronts), **the number of prisoners and missing persons is 7-10 times greater than the number of those killed.** Or, in other words, it is mass captivity and desertion that are the main component of the irretrievable losses of the Red Army in 1941. The situation on the Northern Front quite fits the definition of "exceptions that prove the rule." Neither the conditions of the terrain nor the armament of the impoverished Finnish army allowed it to carry out major operations to encircle the enemy. The fighting had the character of a slow "pushing out" of the Red Army units beyond the 1939 border line. However, even with this "pushing out", 64,188 Soviet soldiers were captured by the Finns. (49, p. 317)

Are these regrettable and shameful figures true? Most likely no. They are clearly underestimated. Only a simple comparison of the losses of personnel and losses of small arms indicated in the collection "The Classification Removed" leads to such an assumption. I do not presume to judge what was more ugly organized in the Red Army - accounting for personnel losses or saving personal weapons, but the figures characterizing these two types of losses categorically do not fit with each other: (2, pp. 162–169, p. 368 , 88 p. 381)

	Общие потери личного состава, тыс.	Потери стрелкового вооружения, тыс.	Соотношение потерь
Вермахт, Восточный фронт, с 22.6 по 31.12.41	831	82	10 к 1
Прибалтийская оборонительная операция. 22.6 - 9.7	88	341	1 к 3,9
Смоленское сражение, 10.7 - 10.9	760	233	3,3 к 1
Ленинградская оборони- тельная операция, 10.7 - 30.9	345	733	1 к 2,1
Киевская оборонительная операция, 7.7 - 26.9	701	1 765	1 к 2,5

It casts doubt on the reliability of accounting for personnel losses and the final (for the entire period of hostilities in 1941) result given on page 152 (Table No. 72 "Losses of personnel of active fronts and individual armies"). The compilers of the collection "Secrecy Removed" cite the following figures for the losses of the Red Army: - total losses of

4,308 thousand people, including: - sanitary losses of 1,314 thousand people; — irretrievable losses of 2,994 thousand people. If this

were true, if the irretrievable losses of the 41st year were "only" (again, I apologize for the forced tactlessness) **3 million** people, then by the end of the year the strength of the active army would have to increase many times (in comparison with the level of June 22, 1941) and reach 7–8 million people. This is a very simple school problem about a pool, into which it flows through one pipe and pours out of another. What human resources were received in the second half of 1941 by units and formations of the active army of the Soviet Union? Oddly enough, but there is no direct and intelligible answer to this most important question. You have to go to the answer by calculation. A total of 14 million people were mobilized. And they weren't redundant. *"Already in August, the remnants of all the ages raised by mobilization (born in 1918–1905) were fully used."* (3, p. 150) As noted above, we are talking about 10 million reservists called up at the first stage of mobilization (according to the Decree of June 22). Then another 4 million were called up. Of course, not all of them ended up in the active army. The active army is only one of many components

Armed Forces. There are also rear and training units, test sites, warehouses and bases, hospitals, and rear airfields. For example, in Germany, with a total number of armed forces of the Reich in 7.25 million people. in units and formations of the active army (on all fronts) in June 1941 there were 3.8 million (52%). In the USSR, over the last three years of the war, the share of the personnel of the active army was 57–58% of the total number of military personnel. (2, p. 138) It can be reasonably assumed that the same figures apply to the distribution of human resources in 1941. In this case, out of a total of 14 million people called up for mobilization, at least **8 million** people. And this is the minimum estimate. Let's not forget that in the summer of 1941 the active fronts also included the armies of the Second Strategic Echelon, then the troops of the internal districts previously considered rear, and at the end of the year - parts of the Far Eastern Front and the so-called "divisions of the people's

militia."

All this simple arithmetic leads us to the fact that the strength of the active army by the end of 1941 should have increased **by at least 5 million people** ($8-3 = 5$.) Even if we assume the worst: not a single wounded person until the end of 1941 did not return to duty, and on this basis, subtract all sanitary losses (1.3 million) from the final figure, then even then the increase in the size of the active army would have to be about 4 million people. In fact (according to Krivosheev's statistical collection, p. 152), the average

monthly strength of the active army by the end of 1941 not only did not increase, but even decreased by 0.5 million people! From 3,334,400 to 2,818,500. The only possible explanation for this change is that real losses outnumbered the recruits

("more spilled out of the pool than flowed in"). In other words, the real irretrievable losses of the Red Army in 1941 did not amount to 3 million at all, but about 8-8.5 million people. Is it possible to reconstruct at least minimally reliable loss statistics? It is quite possible. The sad experience of a great many military conflicts of the 20th

century shows that there is a certain, very stable ratio of the number of killed and wounded in

combat operations. This ratio is 1 to 3. For one killed, there are three wounded. In particular, the losses of the Wehrmacht in 1941 were exactly in such proportions (209,595 killed and missing, 621,308 wounded). (12, p. 161) The numbers of losses of the fronts of the 41st year (killed and sanitary losses) indicated above in the table also fit into the proportion of 1 to 3. The structure of the losses of the Red Army in the largest operations of the 44th - 45th years (Dneprovsko-Carpathian operation - 1 to 3.1; Belarusian operation "Bagration" - 1 to 3.3; Lviv-Sandomierz operation - 1 to 3.5; Budapest operation - 1 to 3.0; Vistula-Oder operation - 1 to 3.5 ; Berlin operation - 1 to 3.5). (2, pp. 197-220) The stable constancy of these figures cannot but surprise, but the facts are just that. They probably reflect some fundamental relationship between the "strength" of the human body and the damaging effect of weapons of that era. Sanitary losses (the number of wounded and sick people

admitted to hospitals for treatment) in 1941 are known (1,314 thousand people). They are quite reliable: in the deep rear there was more order, and the registration was at least double (both on admission and on discharge). Based on the ratio of wounded and killed as 3 to 1, it can be assumed that about 500 thousand people died. The total irretrievable losses of 1941 could not be (according to the above arithmetic considerations) less than 8 million people. Consequently, no less than **6-7 million fighters and commanders "disappeared without a trace."**

6-7 million. As many as there were in the active army on June 22, 1941, and again as much. The

number of "missing persons" (that is, prisoners, deserters, and those killed and wounded not taken into account in the reports of the headquarters) correlates with acceptable accuracy with other, quite reliable information. For example, with the above figure of cumulative losses of small arms (6.3 million units). Further. The German military command recorded the capture in 1941 of **3.8 million** former Red Army soldiers. This figure, as Soviet historians rightly point out, may be somewhat overestimated due to the fact that the Germans included among the prisoners military builders (and in some cases, just men from among

civilian population mobilized to dig trenches and anti-tank ditches). This is true, just as it is true that we are talking about only a few percent of the total number of prisoners. The Germans had no need to "catch" civilian builders and enroll them as prisoners of war. Moreover, the flow of prisoners of war exceeded the Wehrmacht's ability to protect and maintain them. Things got to the point that on July 25, 1941, the order of the quartermaster general No. 11/4590 was issued, in accordance with which the mass release of prisoners of a number of nationalities (Ukrainians, Belarusians, Balts) began. During the validity of this order, that is, until November 13, 1941, 318,770 former Red Army soldiers were sent home (mainly Ukrainians - 277,761 people). (2, p. 334) According to the data cited in the same collection "The

Classification Removed" (that is, at least not exaggerated for the purpose of "evil defamation of the Red Army"), the Soviet military command and the NKVD discovered and condemned for the desertion of **376 thousand** former military personnel. Another **940 thousand** people were "called for the second time." (2, pp. 140, 338) This strange term refers to those soldiers and commanders of the Red Army who, for various reasons, "lagged behind" their military unit and remained in the territory occupied by the Germans. As the Red Army advanced, in 43-44. they were re-armed. At the same time, one should not forget that the initial number of "stragglers" was much larger: someone died from poverty, hunger, shelling, executions and bombings, someone joined the partisans and died in battle, someone signed up for "policemen" and left along with the retreating units of the Wehrmacht. We will probably not be much mistaken in estimating the total number of

deserters (if only this term is applicable to the situation of the massive collapse of the army) at **1.3-1.5 million** people. And this figure is more likely to be underestimated than overestimated. On page 140, the total number of all categories of retired Red Army personnel - killed, dead, missing, captured, convicted and sent to the Gulag (and not to the penal battalion, which is part of the army), demobilized due to injury and illness and "others" - does not agree with the total number indicated on page 139 of "departure for various

reasons from the Armed Forces" for **2,248 thousand** people. The compilers of the collection directly explain this inconsistency by "a significant number of unidentified deserters." Finally,

and this is perhaps the most terrible truth about the beginning of the war, at least 1-1.5 million "missing" consists of those killed and wounded, abandoned during a stampede and not taken into account in the headquarters reports. At least, "arithmetic requires" just such a quantitative assessment. However, even Soviet historians in their writings, without a shadow of embarrassment, informed readers that "the wounded who could not be evacuated were transferred to the care of the local population." Is it worth discussing the question of how the "local population", in whose house there were neither medicines, nor even an extra glass of milk, could take seriously wounded soldiers into their "care"? On November 17, 1941, the head of the Political Directorate of the Western Front, Divisional Commissar Lestev, in his report "On the Political and Moral Condition of the Troops" wrote: "*The seriously wounded or wounded in the legs, who could not walk or even crawl, at best remained in the villages or simply rushed to the field battle, in the forests, and died a slow death from hunger and loss of blood. All this happened in front of people and was one of the reasons that many Red Army soldiers and commanders tried to evade the battle, because they saw the inevitability of death in the wound.*" According to information provided by G. F. Krivosheev, 200 (two hundred) army hospitals were missing, 17 left the encirclement "with heavy

losses." The picture of the unprecedented moral and political decay of the country and the army will be incomplete if we do not at least briefly mention the facts of mass

cooperation with the enemy. Already a few months after the start of the war, in the autumn of 1941, the German command was able to begin the systematic formation of "national" units of the Wehrmacht, staffed by former Soviet citizens (if only the word "citizen" is generally applicable to subjects of the Stalinist empire). So, a total of about 90 so-called "eastern" battalions were created; 26 "Turkestan", 13 "Azerbaijani", 9 "Crimean Tatar", 7 "Volga-Ural", etc.

"volunteer" Cossack formations. So, in May 1942, in the 17th field army of the Wehrmacht, an order was issued to create one Cossack hundred at each army corps and another two hundred at the army headquarters. Its own Cossack hundred appeared in September 1942, even as part of the 8th Italian Army. By the spring of 1943, more than 20 Cossack regiments with a total strength of about 30 fought in the Wehrmacht.

thousands of people.

The most common and massive form of cooperation between former Red Army soldiers and the occupiers was their enlistment in the regular units of the Wehrmacht as the so-called "voluntary assistants" (Hilfswillige, or "Khivi" for short). Initially, the "Khivi" served as drivers, storekeepers, orderlies, sappers, loaders, thus releasing "full-fledged Aryans" for direct participation in hostilities. Then, as the losses of the Wehrmacht grew, the Russian "volunteers" began to arm. In April 1942, there were 200,000 Khivas in the German army. So, in the 6th army of Paulus surrounded at Stalingrad in November 1942 there were 51,800 "Khivi", and in the 71st, 76th and 297th infantry divisions of this army "Russians" (as they called all the former Soviet) accounted for up to 40% of the personnel. In the summer of 1942, there were 47,000 "volunteers" in Manstein's 11th Army. In the end, the scale of mass cooperation with the invaders became so great that the Wehrmacht high command created a special post of "Inspector General of the Eastern Forces." In February 1943, under the command of General Kestring, about **750 thousand people served in the ranks of the Wehrmacht, SS and air defense**. Since October 1943, the Heavis were included in the standard staff of a German infantry division in the amount of 2 thousand per division, which was 15% of the total

the number of personnel.

Such figures are called by foreign historians. The military historians of the Russian General Staff, the compilers of the collection "Secrecy Removed" are in full agreement with them. On page 385 we read: *"The number of personnel of the military formations of the so-called 'voluntary assistants' of Germany, including police and auxiliary, by mid-July 1944, exceeded **800 thousand people**. Only in the SS troops during the war served more than 150 thousand former citizens of the USSR.* On page 334 it is reported that in 1942-1944.

about 500 thousand people were released from among the prisoners of war in German camps in connection with joining the "volunteer formations". But the prisoners were an important, but by no means the only source of human resources. At the service of the Germans were hundreds of thousands of deserters, and millions of conscripts who evaded mobilization at the beginning of the war. And dozens of former Red

Army generals. After the war, 23 former generals of the Red Army were shot or hanged for voluntary surrender and cooperation with the invaders (this is not counting the much larger number of those who received a full-fledged camp term for betrayal). (20) Among the traitors were commanders of the highest rank: -

Chief of the Operations Department of the headquarters of the North-

Western Front Trukhin; - Commander of the 2nd Shock Army Vlasov; - Chief of Staff of the 19th Army Malyshev; - Member of the Military Council of the 32nd Army Zhilenkov; - Commander of the 4th Rifle Corps (Western Front) Yegorov; - Commander of the 21st Rifle

Corps (Western Front) Zakutny. Yes, ten people from among the executed generals were posthumously rehabilitated in the late 50s.

(100, 101) But at the same time, one should not forget that the rehabilitation of the 50s was carried out according to the same rules as the repressions of the 30s. List, without any objective examination, on the direct inst

The executed generals are known by name. About privates, as always, only total numbers are known. Thus, in less than four months of the war (from June 22 to October 10, 1941), 10,201 servicemen of the Red Army were shot by the verdicts of military tribunals and the Special Departments of the NKVD. In total, over the years of the war, only military tribunals (excluding the activities of the NKVD) convicted over **994 thousand** Soviet military personnel, of which **157,593 people were shot**. (98, p. 139) Ten divisions shot ...

Mass desertion and mass surrender were both the cause and the consequence and the main content of the process of turning the Red Army into an uncontrollable mob. Such a seemingly "dialectical" definition is

the only possible way to describe the unprecedented events of the

summer-autumn of 1941. There were no rallies, no "soldiers' committees." Extremely rare were cases of group and organized transition to the enemy. The "typical scheme" of the defeat and disappearance of the military unit of the Red Army (as can be seen from many

memoirs, books, documents) was as follows: Point one. Loss of a commander. The reasons could be very different: he died, was wounded, went to clarify the situation to a higher headquarters, shot himself, just ran away. With regard to units formed in the western, "liberated" regions of the USSR, this list can be added and "killed by subordinates." The loss of a commander was the most common, but not the only "push" that led to the rapid disintegration of a military unit.

Such an impetus could have been a real breakthrough of enemy tanks in the flank and rear, and automatic shooting, arranged by a small group of German motorcyclists, or even just someone's heart-rending cry:

"Surrounded!" Point two. The junior commanders, who took command of the decapitated military unit, decide to "break through to the east." The saving simplicity of such a solution is deceptive. *"Withdrawal is one of the most difficult types of maneuver,"* says Art. 423 of the Field Charter. It is impossible to break away on foot from a motorized enemy, and transport and fuel are quickly running out in a military unit deprived of communications and supplies. Troops that have emerged from field fortifications and left most of their heavy armaments are turning into defenseless targets for enemy aircraft and artillery. Finally, the very situation of the retreat, the feeling of weakness in the face of the enemy, is extremely demoralizing for the troops. A successful withdrawal requires the strictest discipline of subordinates and high skill of commanders, i.e., exactly what is obviously not in the described situation. Point three. After several

unsuccessful attempts to break through, the survivors decide to "withdraw in small groups." All. This is the end. After a few days (or hours), the former battalion (regiment, division) crumbles into dust and ashes.

Point four. A huge number of lonely "wanderers", having wandered aimlessly, without meaning and without food through the fields and forests, go out to the villages, to the people. And in the village - the Germans. Further options are already very few: a compassionate widow, a prisoner of war

camp, service in the "police". That's all. What word can we call these people? Deserters, traitors to the Motherland, who strayed from the military unit, missing, surrendered, captured? What scales, what calipers can be used to measure, what is more in this scheme: "we didn't know how" or "didn't want to"? Inability of commanders to lead or unwillingness of fighters to fight? And is it even possible to separate these categories - skill and desire, qualifications and motivation - in such a "type of activity" as war, where a person is required to overcome every minute the basic instinct of self-preservation for all living things? It is the fundamental inseparability of the concepts "did not want to fight" and "did not know how to fight", and not at all the desire for the notorious "political correctness" that does not allow us to reduce all the causes of the military catastrophe of 1941 to the caricature-simplified formula "the army refused to fight for Stalin".

On the one hand, no, even the highest "motivation" will help stop enemy tanks if the gun crew fired three times in three years of service, if they forgot to bring armor-piercing shells to the battery, if the battery is in one place, tractors without fuel - in another, German tanks break through in the third, and the division headquarters is generally unknown where. On the other hand, it is absolutely absurd to reduce the entire analysis of the course of hostilities to a mere analysis of psychological effects and affects. The army rests not so much on the "opinion of the people" as on order and discipline. The role of the commander - both in the combat training of the unit entrusted to him before the war, and in the fateful minutes of the battle - is enormous, and where the command staff was able to restore order, was able to save their soldiers from infection with general panic, there the Red Army gave a worthy rebuff to the aggressors from the very first days of the war. 831 thousand soldiers and officers of the Wehrmacht were not "lost" by themselves. Every fourth invader who crossed the border of the USSR in June 41 ended up in a grave or in a hospital bed precisely because not all of the Red Army, not all units and formations "scattered through the forests in small groups."

"There are two wills in the field," says an old and wise Russian proverb. The Wehrmacht also consisted of living people, naturally subordinate to the instinct of self-preservation. The more than successful combat operations of the German army, which almost until the very last weeks of the war did not disperse through the forests and fields, also indicate that maintaining order, discipline and controllability in a warring army is, in principle, possible. Yes, it is difficult, difficult, it requires painstaking many years of work on training and education of personnel - from privates to generals inclusive - but it is possible. I think that this statement exhausts everything that a person who is neither a professional military man nor a highly qualified specialist in social psychology can afford in such "theoretical reasoning". As a historian, I can only suggest that twenty years of the dictatorship of the "Lenin-Stalin party"

contributed greatly to the moral decay of the army; that dispossession, the "holodomor" and the system of collective farm slavery significantly reduced the readiness of the mobilized peasants to fight for such a life and for such power. There is no doubt, in my opinion, that the mass repressions of 1937-1938 turned a significant part of the commanding cadres of the Red Army into mortally and life-long frightened people, which, in relation to military affairs, means complete unsuitability. Wild "grimaces and jumps" of foreign policy of 1939-1941, when the rulers of the USSR either declared Hitler a cannibal, or publicly congratulated him on military victories in Europe, also did not contribute to an increase in the readiness of the Red Army soldiers to give their only life in another fight for the redistribution of robber booty between Hitler and Stalin.

Are these circumstances the COMPLETE explanation of the reasons for the transformation of the Red Army into an uncontrollable crowd (which transformation was the main cause of the military catastrophe)? Of course no. The history of Russia did not begin in 1917. Moreover, the unfortunate events of 1917 were not an accident - they matured painfully and long inside Russian society. Yes, and the gentlemen themselves Ulyanov, Bronstein and Dzhugashvili did not fall from the moon to Smolny, but grew up and found thousands of

adherents within Russia itself. Returning closer to the topic, it is worth recalling that disorganization and stupidity were not such rare phenomena in the military history of Russia. In the middle of the 17th century, Ivan Pososhkov wrote in his treatise "On Military Conduct":

"The infantry had a bad gun and they didn't know how to wield it, they only fought with hand combat, spears and reeds, and then blunt, and in battles they changed their heads three, four or more for one enemy head. It is a shame to look at the cavalry: the horses are worthless, the sabers are blunt, they themselves are scarce, without clothes, they don't know how to wield a gun, some nobleman doesn't even know how to charge a squeak, not only to shoot at a target. They kill two or three Tatars and marvel, they make it a great success, but even if they put a hundred of their own - nothing! There is no care to kill the enemy, one concern is how to get home as soon as possible. During the battle,

they are looking for where to hide behind a bush ... " (106) It is worth recalling that after the triumph of 1812, the Russian army, with depressing constancy, demonstrated meager results at monstrous costs. *"The Russian army does not have much to boast about. During the entire existence of Russia as such, the Russians have not yet won a single battle against the Germans, the French, the Poles or the British, without significantly outnumbering them. Under equal conditions, they were always beaten..."* (103, p. 480) Comrade F. Engels once expressed such a subjective opinion. Engels' political opponent, the Russian anarchist M. Bakunin, also agreed with this opinion. *"One has to be an extremely ignorant or blind, leavened patriot,"* he wrote, *"not to admit that all our military means and our notorious, supposedly countless army are nothing in comparison with the German army. German officers excel all officers in the world in theoretical and practical knowledge of military affairs, ardent and quite pedantic devotion to military craft, accuracy, accuracy, endurance, stubborn patience, as well as relative honesty. As a result of all these qualities, the organization and armament of the German armies really exist, and not only on paper, as it was under Napoleon III in France, as it happens all the time with us ... "*One may not agree with these opinions, but one cannot deny the fact, What

The First World War, during which Russia suffered greater human losses than its Western allies, ended in victory for the Allies, and for Russia in the "Brest peace", the conditions of which were not much different from surrender. So the question of who is more to blame for the catastrophe of 1941 - Stalin, Lenin, Nikolai II, Peter the Great or, not by nightfall, Ivan the Torturer - still remains open.

Chapter

19 THE GREAT WISDOM OF COMRADE STALIN

On the morning of June 22, 1941, the leaders of the Soviet Union, as well as their petty hangers-on, experienced a great desire, like an ostrich, to "stick their heads in the sand." Some realized this desire in the most direct sense. Soviet Ambassador to the Kingdom of Italy Com. Gorelkin went away from sin to the beach, where he was forcibly found after 6 hours and 30 minutes. after the Nazi government declared war on the Soviet Union. Moscow radio continued to broadcast peppy Sunday music and regular "reports from the fields", while radio stations all over the world, interrupting their usual transmissions, announced both the beginning of the war and Ribbentrop's press conference that had already taken place. However, the most deafening was the silence of the Great Leader of the Nations. Stalin refused to speak on the radio with the Statement of the Soviet government (whose head he appointed himself only a month and a half ago), refused to head the Headquarters of the High Command (whose nominal leader Timoshenko was appointed on June 23). The main official newspaper of the country (Izvestia) on June 22 reported on peaceful creative work, on June 23, as usual, took a day off and only on the third day of the war, June 24, placed the text of Molotov's speech at the bottom of the front page, above which a huge text was placed, almost the entire newspaper sheet photo. But not Molotov, which would be logical, but ... Stalin. Thus, "citizens and citizens" got the opportunity, if not to hear a firm, encouraging word, then at least to admire the courageous profile of their beloved leader. Meanwhile, the

"leader" himself, finally mixing day with night (the reception in his office began either at 3.20 in the morning or at 7.35 in the evening), tried to understand the flow of incredible messages that came from the front. Let's give him his due: it took Stalin only seven days to understand what was the reason for the unheard-of defeat. Perhaps that is why he understood the meaning of what was happening so quickly and correctly that his "universities" were underground work in a subversive

an organization that once successfully destroyed the Russian army during the World War. Comrade Stalin knew exactly how empires collapse and armies of millions disappear. The truth revealed at that moment turned out to be unreasonably difficult even for this person with the experience of escaping from Siberian exile, the bloody massacre of the Civil War and the deadly "showdown" with Trotsky in the 20s. On the night of June 28-29, Stalin went to his dacha, where he spent **two days in a state of complete prostration - June 29 and 30**, not answering phone calls and not meeting with anyone.

We do not know and will never know what Stalin thought during those two terrible days. But we know for sure what he came up with, sitting alone in an empty house in Kuntsevo. On July 3, 1941, Stalin finally turned over the radio to his subjects with a big speech. Refusing to admit even the slightest mistake, he honestly warned: *"The war with Nazi Germany cannot be considered an ordinary war. It is not only a war between two armies."* In the same speech of July 3, 1941, a phrase was heard that gives the first idea of what methods Comrade Stalin intends to wage this unprecedented war of extermination in history:

"With the forced withdrawal of Red Army units ... do not leave the enemy a kilogram of bread or a liter of fuel. The collective farmers must steal all the livestock, hand over the grain for safekeeping to state bodies for its removal to the rear areas. All valuable property, including non-ferrous metals, grain and fuel, which cannot be taken out, must be destroyed unconditionally." The direct and precise execution of this order (and the

speech of Stalin, who by that time had already appointed himself chairman of the State Defense Committee - the highest emergency authority in the country - was precisely an order binding on everyone) would mean starvation for 40 million civilians left by the retreating Red Army in the occupied territory. The order to destroy all food supplies was not (and could not be) supplemented by a decision on the general evacuation of the population. What total evacuation of people could we talk about if even artillery depots (where

16 million artillery rounds and 8 million mines). (9) Due to chaos and disorganization, this directive of Stalin was not carried out in full, but was fully used by Hitler's propaganda, which issued millions of leaflets on the topic: "Stalin is a murderer and arsonist." Hunger is not the worst thing. An endless series of wars, rebellions,

raids, crop failures taught the Russian peasant "to cook soup from an ax." Forest, river, garden at the very least, but fed and not allowed to die of hunger. But it can be cold in Russia, and the winter of 1941/1942, unfortunately, fell very early and very frosty. This circumstance was also taken into account. On November 17, 1941, Stalin personally signed the Order of the Headquarters of the Supreme High Command No. 0428: "... / order: 1. Destroy and burn to the ground all settlements in the rear of the

German troops at a distance of 40–60 km in depth from the front line and 20–30 km to the right and to the left of the road. To destroy settlements within the indicated radius, immediately drop aircraft, make extensive use of artillery and mortar fire, teams of scouts, skiers and trained sabotage groups equipped with Molotov cocktails, grenades and explosives ... "(102)

By November, the 41st order in the army had increased, and this order was carried out with unswerving perseverance. For example, on November 25, the operational department of the headquarters of the 5th Army (Western Front) draws up a "Report on the progress of the implementation of the Order of the Headquarters No. 0428." Attached is a list of 53 burned villages and hamlets. Honestly and self-critically pointed out some shortcomings ("*Krivosheino - partially burned, Brykino - 5-6 houses left*"). On November 21, the military commissar of the 53rd Cavalry Division reports to a member of the Military Council of the 16th Army (Western Front) that the division command has realized and corrected its previous mistakes:

"You, by your letter No. 018, indicate that we are not fulfilling the order of the Headquarters of the Supreme Command of the Red Army to destroy everything that can be used by the enemy, and that we are showing unnecessary and harmful liberalism in this matter. I must note that before receiving the order from the Headquarters on this issue, we really showed liberalism to the enemy

bread, dwellings, etc. were left. Now this is not the case in parts of our division. On November 19 and 20 alone, we burned four settlements: Gryada - only a few unburned houses remained, Maloye Nikolskoye - completely, the village of Lesodolgorukovo and Denkovo - the result of the fire is not yet known to me, but I personally observed how these settlements were engulfed in flames ... In the future, your instructions will be carried out with even greater perseverance ... ” (75) The list of“

Egyptian executions ”that Stalin decided to inflict on the civilian population of the occupied regions, on the elderly, women and children whom the Soviet state could not protect from invasions of foreign invaders. Already from the beginning of July, a hail of orders, directives, and resolutions on the deployment of a "nationwide partisan movement" rained down along the party and "Chekist" lines. So, on July 1, 1941, the Central Committee of the Communist Party (6) of Belarus issued a directive in which it called on *“to destroy enemies, not to give them rest day or night, to destroy them wherever they can be overtaken, to kill them with everything that comes to hand : with an ax, a scythe, crowbars, lice, knives ... When destroying enemies, do not be afraid to use any means - strangle, chop, burn, poison fascist monsters ... ”It should be noted that the Belarusian Central Committee sent these calls from Vitebsk, where he fled on June 24, three days before the advancing detachments of the "fascist monsters" appeared on the outskirts of Minsk, he fled without making any efforts to organize the evacuation of the population and material values.*

The military authorities did not lag behind the party authorities either. On August 6, 1941, Marshal Timoshenko - this time as commander of the troops of the Western Front - addressed "to all the inhabitants of the territories occupied by the enemy." The marshal and former commander-in-chief, who had lost his army, lost tens of thousands of tanks, planes, guns, now called unarmed people to such actions: *“ Attack*

and destroy German transports and columns, burn and destroy bridges, set fire to houses and forests ... Beat the enemy, torment him starve to death, burn it with fire, destroy it with a bullet and a grenade ... Set fire to warehouses, destroy the Nazis like mad dogs ... ” (42, p. 141)

One can argue about whether there would be an army in the world whose command would not respond with cruel mass repressions to such actions against their soldiers ("choke, chop, burn, poison like mad dogs"). But there is no doubt that the reaction of the command of the Wehrmacht and the SS was easily predictable. However, the Soviet leadership was not only aware that the result of its appeals would be massacres of the population - it was striving for the onset of just such consequences. Moreover, with all the means at its disposal, it pushed the enemy to the most cruel treatment of civilians.

population.

Wehrmacht documents, unfortunately too numerous and reliable, testify that already in the very first days of the war, already in June 1941, the advancing German troops in many places found the corpses of their soldiers, who, for a number of reasons, were captured (stragglers, the wounded, the crews of downed aircraft) who were tortured with unimaginable sadistic cruelty. (42, pp. 267-274, 298-299) It is impossible to believe that the Red Army soldiers, that is, for the most part, yesterday's Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian peasants, already in the first days of the war managed to be imbued with such insane hatred, blinded which yesterday's grain grower or miner could "gouge out eyes, cut off tongues, ears and noses, and also rip off the skin from arms and legs" from wounded enemy soldiers.

Much more realistic is the hypothesis that these crimes were committed by special teams of the NKVD with the aim of deliberately provoking the German troops to retaliate against the population and captured Red Army soldiers. At the very least, the assumption that the brutal murders of German soldiers were carried out by the hands of the "friends of the people" from the NKVD, fully correlates with the facts of the mass extermination of prisoners in the prisons of Western Ukraine and Belarus, carried out by the "Chekists" in the very first days of the war. So. On July 12, 1941, the head of the prison department of the NKVD of Ukraine, captain of state security A.F. Filippov, reported to Moscow on the work done: " ... 2,466 people left the prisons of the Lviv region in the 1st category...

pits dug in the basements of prisons, in the city of Zlochev - in the garden ... The local bodies of the NKGB for the most part carried out operations in the 1st category on prison workers, remaining on the sidelines, and since this happens at the time of retreat under enemy fire, it is not everywhere prison officials were able to carefully bury the corpses and disguise them outwardly..." (104) - a special commission of the US

Congress in 1954. However, Lvov was not an exception at all. So, judging by the mentioned report of Captain Filippov. 1,101 people died in the Drogobych region "according to the 1st category", 1,000 in Stanislav region, 674 in Tarnopol region, 230 in Rivne region, and 231 in Volyn region. 9,439 corpses were exhumed with the participation of an international forensic commission), Oshmyany, Vitebsk, Riga, Tartu, Rezekne, Daugavpils ... It is worth mentioning the city whose name was so often found in the previous chapters of this book. The reports of officers of the 48th Army Corps of the Wehrmacht state that on June 26, more than 500 corpses, including 100 women, were found in the Dubno prison. *"The picture at the entrance to the prison and cells was creepy, and beyond words ... All the people were completely naked. In each cell, 3-4 women were hanging with their heads down, they were tied with ropes to the ceiling. As far as I remember, all the women had their breasts and tongues cut out..." (42, p. 270)* The organizers and perpetrators of these crimes were now to become fighters and commanders of the "people's avengers". Doctor of Historical Sciences V. I. Boyarsky, full member of the Academy of Military Sciences, and also a former KGB colonel, in his documentary material, unique in terms of the volume

research writes:

"... It was the organs and troops of the NKVD that played the leading role in the deployment of the partisan movement, the creation of detachments and sabotage groups at the first stage, that is, until May 1942 ... Most of the partisan detachments were completely formed from the NKVD and the police, without involving local residents ... In

later, in the process of creating partisan detachments by the regional committees of the party from among the local party Soviet activists, their leading core was still made up of operative officers of the NKVD ... , operatives of the NKVD and the police, the Agents of the State Security Organs..." (105, pp. 71, 76, 82)

Employees of the "organs", which in the 20-30s were called "punitive" without unnecessary sentimentality, could not but bring to the partisan movement all their previous skills acquired during the years of mass repressions. Complete indifference to civilian casualties, reliance on terror and provocations, looting and drunkenness - all this was fully manifested in the activities of partisan detachments, hastily molded from "NKVD operational officers." We should not forget that the system for training professional saboteurs was almost completely destroyed during the years of the Great Terror, and most of the experienced special forces were erased into "camp dust". Sometimes things reached the point of complete absurdity. So, in October 1941, GlavPUR sent out to the army political agencies "Instructions on the organization and actions of partisan detachments", drawn up in 1919! (105, p. 191) And if the distribution of the instructions of 1919 can be classified as a curiosity, then the task set at the highest level of "mow down the Germans with scythes and prick with pitchforks" indicates at least a complete misunderstanding of the tasks of armed struggle behind enemy lines. The further deep into Soviet territory the German troops advanced, the more their transport communications stretched. Each projectile and each cartridge had to travel several thousand kilometers from a factory in Germany to the battle formations of Wehrmacht units, to overcome dozens of rivers and bridges. These transport arteries passed through a deserted wooded and swampy area, created by nature itself for effective sabotage operations. There was supposed to be a center for applying the efforts of carefully prepared sabotage groups. But Comrade Stalin, it seems, perceived the population of the occupied regions as spent slag, which no longer had any value: these people could not be used either as free labor or as cannon fodder.

Even worse, they could be used by the enemy. Therefore, the death of thousands of such "ownerless people" was considered by him as a completely acceptable "price" for the murder of a couple of gaping German

vacationers... and tanks, Comrade Stalin had much more definite feelings. Having recovered from the first shock caused by the completely unthinkable behavior of the Red Army, Stalin began to restore order in the only way known and accessible to him. On July 16, 1941, he personally signed GKO Decree No. 169, which began verbatim like this:

"The State Defense Committee establishes that units of the Red Army in battles with the German invaders in most cases hold high the great banner of Soviet power and behave satisfactorily, and sometimes downright heroically, defending their native land from fascist robbers. However, along with this, the State Defense Committee must recognize that individual commanders and ordinary soldiers show instability; alarmism, shameful cowardice, throw down their weapons and, forgetting their duty to the Motherland, grossly violate the oath, turn into a herd of sheep, running in a panic before an insolent enemy.

Giving honor and glory to the brave fighters and commanders, the State Defense Committee considers it necessary at the same time that the strictest measures be taken against cowards, alarmists, deserters..." (6, p. 473)

Then came a list of 9 names of generals arrested "for *dishonoring the title of commander of cowardice, inaction of the authorities, lack of command, the collapse of command and control, the surrender of weapons to the enemy without a fight and the unauthorized*

abandonment of military positions." The most famous among them were the top commanders of the Western Front. The reason why it was the command of the Western Front (and not, for example, the neighboring North-Western, which was defeated at the same pace, or the Southern, which shamefully fled before the wretched Romanian army) was cho

demonstrative massacre, no one knows. The choice of specific individuals among the generals of the Western Front was simple and understandable - those who, by the time the Decree was adopted, managed to get out of the encirclement to their own, went under the knife. The commander of the 4th Army, which was hit by Guderian's tank group, was shot. The commander of the 10th, the most powerful army of the front, which was also located on a passive (from the point of view of the advancing Wehrmacht) section of the border, escaped with a slight fright, since he left the encirclement much later. Nothing bad happened to Marshal Kulik, who in the first days of the war arrived at the headquarters of the 10th Army as a plenipotentiary representative of the Headquarters - he was even returned the marshal's stars, which he threw into the bushes (along with all documents, orders and insignia). The commander of the 3rd Army of the Western Front and the deputy commander of the front not only did not suffer any punishment, but were even noted by the Supreme Commander's praise in his August order No. 270. The fact that he "brought out of *encirclement of 498 armed Red Army soldiers and commanders of units of the 3rd Army*, ie, less than one percent of the personnel of the army entrusted

On the same day, July 16, 1941, the institute of commissars was restored in the Red Army. Now the order of the commander of a unit or formation was invalid until it was signed by a representative of the party. The next day, July 17, 1941, Stalin signed GKO Decree No. 187, according to which the "special departments" were once again removed from the subordination of the military command and transferred to the joint control of the NKVD and commissars: "Subordinate the Directorate of Special Departments and *Special* Departments to the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, and the authorized Special Department in the regiment and the Special Department in the division should *simultaneously be subordinated to the regiment commissar and division commissar, respectively . in*

place. To oblige the NKVD to put at the disposal of the Special Departments the necessary armed detachments from the troops of the NKVD. (6, p. 475)

Three days later, on July 20, 1941 (this time by the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, for Stalin strictly observed the norms

Stalin's Constitution), two repressive departments (NKVD and NKGB) were merged into one People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs under Comrade Beria.

Two weeks later, in early August 1941, in the Uman region (Ukraine), two armies were surrounded and surrendered: the 6th and 12th. In total, according to reports from the Wehrmacht command, about 100 thousand people were taken prisoner in the Uman region. Both army commanders (Muzychenko and Ponedelin), four corps commanders and a great many commanders of a lower rank were captured by the enemy. Among them was one of the "defendants" of the Decree of the State Defense Committee No. 169 of July 16. The commander of the 60th Mountain Rifle Division, Major General M. B. Salikhov, oddly enough, was not then sentenced to death, but only demoted to colonel and received "10 years in prison with a sentence after the war." Having surrendered in August of the 41st, the former General Salikhov later became one of the organizers of the Vlasov ROA. After the war, on August 1, 1946, he was hanged by the verdict of the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court. (20, p. 151)

On August 5, 1941, the commander of Army Group Center, General Field Marshal von Bock, issued an order stating that *"the three-week battle near Smolensk ended in a brilliant victory for German weapons and German duty. 309,110 prisoners, 3,205 destroyed or captured tanks were captured as trophies ... I look with gratitude and pride at the troops capable of such actions ... "* (72, p. 75)

Stalin also found it necessary to respond to a new series of defeats and encirclements. On August 16, the famous Headquarters Order No. 270 "On cases of cowardice and surrender and measures to suppress such actions" was issued. It is unlikely that in the military history of civilized countries there will be an analogue of this document. For greater persuasiveness, Order No. 270 was sealed with the signatures of Stalin, Molotov, Budyonny, Voroshilov, Timoshenko, Shaposhnikov and Zhukov. In the ascertaining part, it was noted that *"by their behavior at the front, some commanders and political workers not only do not show the Red Army men an example of courage, stamina and love for the Motherland, but, on the contrary, hide in cracks, fiddle around in the offices, do not see and do not observe the battlefield, but at the first serious difficulties in battle, they give i*

tear off their insignia, desert from the battlefield. The operative part of the order read: "I order: Commanders

and political

workers who, during the battle, tear off their insignia and desert to the rear or surrender to the enemy, are considered malicious deserters, whose families are subject to arrest as families of deserters who violated the oath and betrayed their homeland.

Oblige all higher commanders and commissars to shoot on the spot such deserters from the command staff.

Units and subunits that are surrounded by the enemy selflessly fight to the last opportunity, protect the materiel like the apple of their eye, break through to their rear of the enemy troops, inflicting defeat on the fascist dogs.

To oblige each serviceman, regardless of his official position, to demand from a superior commander, if part of him is surrounded, to fight to the last opportunity in order to break through to his own, and if such a commander or part of the Red Army men, instead of organizing a rebuff to the enemy, prefer to surrender - to destroy them by all means, both ground and air, and deprive the families of Red Army soldiers who have surrendered of state benefits and assistance ...

Read the order in all companies,

squadrons, batteries,

squadrons, commands and headquarters. (6, p. 479)

It is extremely important for understanding Comrade Stalin's way of thinking that in this fundamental order he did not consider it possible or necessary to even mention such lofty motives as "defending the gains of October", "saving mankind from fascist barbarism", did not mention Dmitry Donskoy, nor about Alexander Nevsky, nor about the thousand-year history of Russia. Simply and bluntly, the Red Army soldiers were reminded that their families - if they are in the territory controlled by the NKVD / VKP (b) authorities - are hostages of their behavior at the front. In order for the modern reader to understand the specific meaning of the phrase "to deprive state benefits and assistance", we will give a few figures from the report of the Central Statistical Board of the USSR State Planning Committee on market prices for food and wages of workers as of the summer of 1943: (107, pp. 235–237)

- the average monthly salary in the whole national economy is 403 rubles;

- the average monthly salary of workers in industry is 443 rubles;

- the average monthly salary of healthcare workers is 342 rubles;

- the average monthly salary of state farm workers is 203

- rubles; - rye bread, 1 kg 100

- rubles; - sugar, 1 kg

- 650 rubles; - laundry soap, 400 g.

230 rubles. The threat to destroy those who surrendered "*by all means, both ground and air*" was also not an empty phrase. In the autumn of 1941, Soviet aircraft bombed the POW camps in the Orel and Novgorod-Seversky regions. (42, p. 103) It is hardly worth recalling the well-known fact that the Soviet Union refused all cooperation with the International Red Cross, which made it impossible to provide assistance - primarily food and medicine - to the Red Army soldiers in German captivity. After the appearance of Order No. 270, only victory, any victory, no matter who - Hitler or Stalin, became the only chance for the soldiers of the Red Army to see their relatives and friends alive. To many at that moment, a German victory seemed more likely. So, on September 3, 1941, Comrade Stalin, trying to both frighten and pity Churchill, wrote to him : *will be defeated or will be weakened to the point that it will lose for a long time the ability to provide assistance to its allies by active operations on the front of the fight against Nazism ...* " (57, p. 208) Less than a month has passed since the issuance of Order No. 270, as September 12, 1941 Directive No. 001919 was adopted. In the first lines of this Directive, already without any equivocation ("on the one hand ... but on the other hand ...") the

following was said verbatim: "*The experience of fighting German fascism showed that in our rifle divisions there are many panic and downright hostile elements, which, at the first pressure from the enemy, drop their weapons, start shouting: "we are surrounded"*

and drag the rest of the fighters with them. As a result, the division turns to flight,

throws the material part and then single-handedly begins to leave the forest. Similar phenomena take place on all fronts..." (5, p. 180) This time, in order to combat

"similar phenomena", it was supposed not to be limited to threats of mass executions alone, but also to create appropriate organizational structures for this - barrage detachments numbering at least one companies to the rifle regiment! Alas, it was all in vain. In early September, the Germans crossed the full-flowing Dnieper in the Kremenchug region on the move, with virtually no serious fighting, built 1.5-kilometer pontoon bridges, along which the tank divisions moved to the eastern coast. Guderian's tank group moved across the Desna along the unexploded bridge near Makoshino (to this day books and films are published in which this disgrace is explained by the fact that "the bridge was captured by a large detachment of German paratroopers"). Two days after the signing of Directive No. 001919, on the evening of September 14, the advanced units of the 2nd Tank Group (3rd Tank Division) and the 1st Tank Group (9th Tank Division) of the Wehrmacht met in the Lokhvitsa area. This meant that the encirclement ring of the giant "Kyiv cauldron" closed. It is worth noting, however, that before the start of the offensive, the 3rd TD had 41 serviceable tanks (5 Pz-IV, 6 Pz-III, 30 Pz-II), and the 9th TD had 51 tanks (6 Pz -IV, 31 Pz-III, 14 Pz-II), 48 medium tanks in total. A huge, half a million strong grouping of Soviet troops stopped organized resistance in less than a week. The Wehrmacht High Command reported the capture of 665,000 prisoners, 3,718 guns and 884 tanks.

October 1941 began with the encirclement of the main forces of the Western, Reserve and Bryansk fronts (67 rifle and 6 cavalry divisions, 13 tank brigades) in the two largest "cauldrons" near Vyazma and Bryansk. According to the Wehrmacht High Command, 658 thousand people were taken prisoner, 5,396 guns and 1,241 tanks were captured. The October catastrophe in its scale far exceeded the defeat of the Western Front, which took place in June 1941. Another qualitative difference between the Vyazemsky boiler and the Minsk boiler was

many generals of the highest level who were in German captivity. Among them: commander of the 19th Army Lukin, commander of the 20th Army Ershakov, member of the Armed Forces of the 32nd Army Zhilenkov, commander

32nd Army Vishnevsky, chief of staff of the 19th Army Malyshkin, chief of artillery of the 24th Army Moshenin, chief of artillery of the 20th Army Prokhorov. In total, in six months of 1941, 63 generals of the Red Army were captured by the Germans ... If the

repressive measures against the military turned out to be essentially ineffective, then the merciless policy towards the population of the occupied regions gave a pronounced negative result. Stalin's demands to turn the entire territory occupied by the Germans into a scorched desert, the provocative actions of "partisans from the NKVD" led to the spontaneous creation of self-defense units in the countryside, which took over the protection of villages and their inhabitants from armed gangs of any "orientation". The occupation authorities had only to unite all these "services of order", "defense teams" under their own control and command. The legendary patriarch of Soviet saboteurs, a participant in four wars, Colonel I. Starinov, in an article written in 2000, said: *"The Germans quickly took advantage of this situation. Say, if you don't want to end up in a thirty-degree frost with your children, go and protect yourself from arsonists. It turned out that we ourselves pushed the locals to the Germans ... After the appearance of the slogan 'Drive the German into the cold', the Germans formed a police force of about 900 thousand people."* (105, pp. 261, 267) The figure itself (900,000 people) is many times overestimated. It most likely reflects the personal impressions of the partisan warrior that "policemen were at every turn." But these impressions are by no means deceptive.

According to the original plan of the Soviet leadership, small "Chekist" groups (their number, as a rule, was 20-25 people) were to play the role of "condensation centers", around which, figuratively speaking, partisan "clouds" would gather. In fact, the attitude of the population of the regions occupied by the Germans to the "people's avengers" from among the "state security agencies" was such that the number of partisans not only did not increase, but by the summer of 1942 it had significantly decreased - and this despite the fact that the area of the occupied territories was noticeably increased after the Kharkov disaster and the German breakthrough to Stalingrad. *"UNKVD in the Leningrad Region sent 287 detachments behind enemy lines*

with a total number of 11,733 people. By February 7, 1942, only 60 detachments of 1,965 people remained, that is, about 17% ... In Ukraine, the state security agencies left behind enemy lines and transferred 778 partisan detachments and 622 sabotage groups with a total number of 28,753 people there. However, as of August 25, 1942, contact was maintained with only 216 detachments ... only 22 detachments, numbering 3,310 people, were listed as active. Consequently, during the 12 months of the war, less than 3% of partisan detachments and groups from among those abandoned behind enemy lines in 1941 survived ... The situation in Belarus was no better ... By January 1942, out of 437 groups and detachments that were abandoned behind enemy lines, they stopped its existence 412, or 95% ... In the very first winter of war, almost all large formations, numbering several hundred people, were destroyed or disintegrated into separate groups ..

”(105, p. 82, 158) A drowning man clings to straws . After hundreds of divisions of the Red Army failed to stop the triumphal march of the Wehrmacht, Comrade Stalin decided to do what tens of thousands of victims of the Great Terror were accused of and for which they were shot: he called on the British imperialists to invade the country of the victorious proletariat. On September 13, he already asked Churchill "to land 25-30 divisions in Arkhangelsk or transfer them through Iran to the southern regions of the USSR" (57, p. 213). An amazing idea, especially if we take into account that before the start of the war, the ratio of the strength of the ground armies of the USSR and Great Britain was about 10 to 1 ... As expected, the proposal to send all the available forces of the British army to Arkhangelsk did not cause a positive reaction in London. Showing the traditional British composure, Churchill did not remind his newfound ally that a few months ago they did not even want to talk to the British Ambassador in Moscow, and even more so - to give him any explanation on the question of which side in the world war is the Soviet government. In his response letter, Churchill limited himself to a cold statement that "an action that leads only to a costly failure - no matter how laudable its motives - can only be useful to Hitler."

Salvation came from where Stalin could not have expected it. This miraculous deliverance from imminent death shocked the "leader of the peoples" so much that he could not restrain himself and declared it publicly. True, then he quickly came to his senses and never said this out loud again. But in November 1941, speaking at a solemn meeting dedicated to the next anniversary of the Bolshevik coup, Stalin told the truth: "Hitler's ***stupid policy turned the peoples of the USSR into sworn enemies of today's Germany.***" (108) You can't say more

precisely. Hitler committed a long series of blatant stupidities at a time when victory over the Stalinist empire literally fell into his hands. The first mistake was the very strategic orientation towards a purely military defeat of the enemy. One and a half hundred German divisions could not occupy the country, stretching from Brest to Vladivostok and from Murmansk to Ashgabat. If the Soviet Union could be destroyed, then only by an explosion from within (which actually happened exactly half a century later), and the only meaning of a military operation could only be the initiation of such an explosion. But Hitler, this narcissistic fanatic who imagined himself to be an instrument of "providence", could not (or did not want to) understand such obvious truths. And yet, regardless of the initial plans of the Nazi leadership, the process of internal decomposition of the Soviet state went at an ever-increasing pace. In the national outskirts of the USSR (the Baltic states, Western Ukraine, later the North Caucasus and the Kuban), a full-scale armed uprising began, which led to the emergence of governments of self-proclaimed "states" in Lvov, Riga and Kaunas. Most of the population of the central regions of the country met the Germans without flowers, but with a mixed feeling of distrust and expectation. By the beginning of autumn, the Germans had one and a half million former Red Army soldiers in captivity, during September-October 1941 this number more than doubled. In fact, it was a huge "draft contingent", with ready-made command cadres, with military specialists of all kinds and with cyclopean mountains of ammunition and weapons - from rifles to KV tanks, inclusive - which, after all, did not evaporate without a trace, but remained in a giant

quantity in the territory controlled by the Wehrmacht. Finally, there were generals ready to lead the anti-Soviet Russian army.

Among the captured generals of the Red Army, who discussed (judging by the protocols of their interrogations) with the German command the question of the possibility or even the need to create an anti-Stalin "government" and an army subordinate to it from prisoners of war of the Red Army. J. Hoffman names, in particular, the commander of the 5th Army Potapov, the commander of the 20th Army Ershakov, the commander of the 19th Army Lukin, the commander of the 8th rifle corps Snegov, the commander of the 10th tank division Ogurtsov, the commander of the 72nd mountain rifle division of Abramidze. Here are listed the names of only those generals who - unlike many others - did not, in the end, take the path of active cooperation with the enemy. Ershakov died in a concentration camp, Ogurtsov escaped from captivity, joined a partisan detachment and died in battle, Potapov, Snegov and Abramidze, after being released and under surveillance, were reinstated in the army and even awarded the highest orders.

(20) The fate of Lieutenant General M. F. Lukin can serve as a particularly indicative indicator for assessing the mindset of the highest Soviet generals. An outstanding commander, a hero of the battles at Shepetovka, Smolensk and Vyazma, he was captured after a severe wound, in an unconscious state (his leg was amputated in a German hospital). During the special inspection, some facts of his "anti-Soviet activity" were revealed, but on August 31, 1945, in a report addressed to Stalin, the head of Smersh, Abakumov, wrote: "considering that as a result of the injury he remained a cripple, he would consider it expedient to release and *secure agent surveillance*. (101) In the future, General Lukin slowly but surely began to turn into a poster model of an unbending hero who, once in German captivity, "contemptuously rejected all the promises and threats of the enemy." M. F. Lukin was awarded the Order of Lenin (1946), two Orders of the Red Banner (1946, 1947), and the Order of the Red Star (1967). He was awarded the title of "Honorary Citizen of Smolensk", and a street in this city was named after him. A legend appeared and ran from publication to publication about how Stalin told the general who returned from captivity: "Thank you for saving Moscow." In 1966, Marshals Timoshenko, Rokossovsky and Konev petitioned for

awarding Lukin the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, but this proposal was then rejected. Finally, in 1993, General Lukin was posthumously awarded the title of Hero of Russia. At about the same time, the protocol of interrogation of December 14, 1941, which had long been known to Western historians, was translated into Russian and published, during which the captured General Lukin had the following conversations with the Germans:

"... The Communists promised land to the peasants, and factories and plants to the workers, so the people supported them. Of course, this was a terrible mistake, because today the peasant, in comparison with the past, has nothing at all, and the average salary of a worker is 300-500 rubles a month, for which he cannot buy anything. When there is nothing to eat and there is a constant fear of the system, then, of course, the Russians would be very grateful for its destruction and getting rid of the Stalinist regime ... If an alternative Russian government is nevertheless created, many Russians will think about the following: firstly, there will be an anti-Stalinist a government that will stand for Russia, secondly, they will be able to believe that the Germans are really fighting only against the Bolshevik system, and not against Russia, and thirdly, they will see that there are also Russians on your side who are not against Russia, but for Russia. Such a government could become a new hope for the people... If Budyonny and Timoshenko had led the uprising, then perhaps a lot of blood would not have been shed. But they, too, must be sure that there will be Russia and a Russian government... The new Russia does not have to be the same as the old one. It may even be without Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic states, being on good terms with Germany. It is only in your power to help create such a Russia and a government, and not in ours ... " (110) The Wehrmacht generals, who saw the situation in the Red Army and in prison camps from close range, repeatedly turned to Hitler with a proposal to

use the unique situation with the goal of the early withdrawal of the USSR from the war. It seemed quite real to repeat the experience of 1917-1918, when Germany, supporting the change of power in Russia, concluded a separate Brest Peace with the new government and thus secured a free hand for an offensive on the Western Front. Formula

Taras Bulba ("I gave birth to you, I will kill you") could well have been applied by the Germans to the Bolshevik regime and Russia. On the ruins of the Soviet Union, several "independent states" allied to Nazi Germany (like Slovakia or Croatia) could be created, which would provide the Wehrmacht with food, raw materials for the military industry, and auxiliary military formations. However, Hitler, in whose diseased brain the racist nonsense about the "inferiority of the Slavs" fancifully mixed with the fear of the eastern giant, answered that he did not need an alliance with the Slavic "subhumans", and the Wehrmacht was required to simply and quickly defeat the Red Army. Then he stopped responding altogether. When the commander of Army Group Center, Field Marshal von Bock, sent to Berlin a project to create a "liberation army" of 200 thousand volunteers and form a Russian government in Smolensk, his report was returned in November 1941 with Keitel's resolution: "such ideas cannot be discussed with the Fuhrer. For the most biased and inattentive readers, I explain: the

above is not a story about "how good it could be." These are sad thoughts that everything could be even worse than it was in reality, although, it would seem, much worse? There was no ford in the fire of the world war, and the defeat of Stalin would only mean a colossal strengthening of Hitler's position, in whose hands the gigantic raw materials resources of the richest country in the world, and even millions of obedient and habitual workers, could be. The regime that could be established on the territory "liberated" from the power of the NKVD / VKP (b) would most likely differ from the Stalinist one only in the color of the banners and inscriptions on the doors of the authorities' offices. It is possible that the names of the owners of the cabinets could remain the same. In any case, after 20 years of the most severe terror, after 20 years of artificial "negative selection", during which everyone who was supposed to have intelligence, honor and conscience was expelled and exterminated, there was no hope for the spontaneous emergence of a full-fledged and capable democracy. And even more so - it would not be in Hitler's interests to form democratic power in the vassal "Russian principalities." It could be better only in the case described in the Extra Chapter. But this could never be, and therefore that chapter is superfluous ...

Captured Red Army soldiers, who were abandoned by the Soviet state, were herded like cattle into huge glades entangled with barbed wire and starved there with dysentery. Better than all the GlavPUR agitators put together, the fascist leaders showed and proved to the soldiers of the Red Army that captivity is also not a salvation from death, to which they had "four steps" in any direction ... The liberation of captured Red Army soldiers of a number begun at the time on the initiative of the army command Nationalities were banned on November 13, 1941. And then came the early and fierce winter, in which two-thirds of the prisoners of 1941 died from cold, hunger and disease. With the same categorical clarity, the occupation administration demonstrated to the stunned population that it was time to forget the formula "Germans are a cultured nation", and you need to get used to the "new order", which turned out to be even simpler than the old one: execution on the spot for any offense. With defiant frankness, the people were explained that serving the representatives of the "master race" would henceforth be the only meaning of life for those who were allowed to live.

Having missed such a close and real opportunity to liquidate the Eastern Front by political means, Hitler did not even bother to make the most of all available military potential to achieve victory on the battlefield. Dozens of Wehrmacht divisions, hundreds of thousands of military personnel, millions of reservists in the deepest rear "prepared for operations of the period after Barbarossa, at a time when the troops of the Eastern Front did not leave fierce battles for months. In the midst of the battle for Moscow, 6 fighter air groups (regiments) of the Luftwaffe (out of a total of 22 that had been on the Eastern Front since the beginning of the war) were transferred to the Mediterranean theater of operations. Even those relatively moderate losses that the German troops suffered in the summer of 1941 were not compensated in full by the replenishment of personnel. Even after the failure of the original plan to destroy the Red Army "in the course of a short campaign" became completely obvious, Hitler and his henchmen were by no means in a hurry to strain all the resources of Germany in order to turn the tide. It is enough just to name three figures to make clear the depth of the abyss between potential

the possibilities of the German economy and their real use in 1941: -
the

average monthly production of tanks in Germany, 1944: 1,530; -

average monthly production of tanks in Germany, 1941: 340; -

deliveries of tanks to the Eastern Front (July - August 41): 89.

The Germans did not reach Moscow, they crawled to it with their last legs. By October 16, 1941, five tank divisions of Guderian's 2nd Tank Army had 271 tanks, most of which were not combat-ready; in three tank divisions of the 1st tank army that day there were only 165 tanks. In the 39th tank corps of Gotha, by the end of October, there were 60 people in the battalion. (88) To top it off, Hitler found himself a "reliable ally" in the form of the Japanese military. At that time (October - November 1941), when hundreds of echelons were carrying away the last strategic reserve of the Soviet Union from the Far East to the Moscow region - full-fledged divisions of the Far Eastern Front, the Siberian and Trans-Baikal military districts - the Japanese "militarists" were completing the last preparations for an attack on ... the United States ! After Pearl Harbor, Hitler, true to his allied duty, officially declared war on America, and thus, with the remnants of the Eastern Army freezing in the Russian snows, he found himself in a situation of a protracted war of attrition against the USSR, the USA and the British Empire (which then included not only a small , but a very proud island, but also Canada, India with Pakistan, Australia, South Africa and a couple of dozen more colonies and semi-colonies in Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia). Of course, even after that, the military defeat of the fascist "Reich" did not become a simple and easy thing, and after the winter of 1941/1942, rivers of blood were shed on all fronts of the world war, but the final outcome of the struggle was no longer in doubt ...

The Stalinist regime emerged from the war in the radiance and splendor of the greatest triumph. The Owner himself was declared the most brilliant commander of all times and peoples. The delighted and enchanted satraps presented him with the highest military rank of Generalissimo. The reasons for the celebration were serious: the growth of the military-technical might of the communist regime, a huge increase in i

the possibilities of making the whole world tremble with fear were undeniable. A gigantic army (which, having discarded the last memories of the revolutionary past as unnecessary, was no longer called the "Red") was already standing on the banks of the Danube and the Elbe. Thousands of tons of technical documentation were taken out of defeated Germany, entire research and design teams were taken out. From gullible enemy allies,

by hook or by crook, they bought, mined, and stole the latest military technologies. The booty was huge: jet engines, anti-aircraft missiles, radars, ballistic missiles, infrared homing systems ... And, finally, the pinnacle of all efforts - twenty thousand pages of technical description of the American atomic bomb, copied and successfully tested just four years after the fall of Berlin. The life of the subjects of the empire was also unprecedented and unparalleled. Let's be honest, in "The Russia

We Lost", a simple worker did not live painfully satisfying, but once every 5-7 years, after another whim of nature and the resulting crop failure, he completely starved. The housing problem, which escalated during the years of forced industrialization, forced tens of millions of "sovereign masters of the country" to line up at the communal toilet. All this, of course, did not add joy and forced official propaganda to remind those who had forgotten that "life has become better, life has become more fun" with particular zeal. But such horrendous poverty, in which the Soviet people lived in the late 40s, has never happened. Hundreds of cities and tens of thousands of villages were completely destroyed by the retreating German army, which received from its command the same command to destroy everything and everything, but - unlike the Red Army - carried it out with German perseverance and pedantry. Millions of families were left without men, workers and breadwinners, millions of disabled people have become a bitter burden for themselves and their loved ones. The people lived in barracks, dugouts, sheds, basements, with "amenities" in the yard and a water tap in the next block. And from these endlessly tired, exhausted, ragged and hungry people, the last veins were pulled through overwork. No, Stalin was not evil by nature

human, he would have been glad (perhaps) to give his slaves a break - but there was no such possibility. It was necessary to hurry, time was already hopelessly lost: the Americans had bombs (however, no one knew exactly how many) and invulnerable delivery vehicles were about to appear. There was very little time left for a second (and as Stalin himself perfectly understood - the last in his life) attempt to conquer the world. Therefore, again, from dawn to dawn, the workshops of huge military factories hummed and rumbled, again every morning it met with a coolness squeezed out like a lemon by the night shift, which freed up space at the machine tools and machines for a new shift of the doomed

"liberators". Stalin did not have extra resources to feed, clothe and put on new clothes, to provide normal housing and a cheap Volkswagen to each of the victors who survived the world-wide slaughter he organized. But he did smarter. He showed great wisdom and made one, but truly royal gift for everyone: Stalin gave his subjects a TALE. Oh, this story was beautiful and scary at the same time. It was a fairy tale about a beautiful young country, in which, among the endless fields and rivers, one could breathe unusually easily and happily. In this country, everyone was equal, everyone was free, there was no envy, denunciations, torture, executions, concentration camps. Churches and prisons were razed to the ground, peaceful, creative, free labor became the master of this land and raised its symbol over it - a shield and a sword. But one day, on a sunny summer morning, dark forces suddenly and treacherously attacked a beautiful country. And then the whole people, as one man, rose to the mortal battle. It was truly a mortal battle, because countless hordes of enemies were armed with the latest weapons, and the wise ruler of a beautiful country often spoke in the international arena, where he pursued an invariably peaceful foreign policy and did not even think about any war. At this point, the fairy tale has already lost the last crumbs of common sense (for what then was the wisdom of a wise ruler, if bad people circled him like a child?), but do they really love fairy tales for their contemptible "common sense"? The noble fury of peaceful people boiled up like a wave and fell upon the damned horde of invaders. The defenders of the wonderful country did not have tanks, there were no planes, there were no simple rifles, but there was an unparalleled

history of mass heroism. They threw themselves at the enemy machine guns, with bottles they threw themselves under enemy tanks and, standing on the scaffold, shouted in the faces of the enemies: "We are two hundred million! You don't hang everyone!" And the black hordes fled in fear away from this country, and the whole world in admiration met the army of the wise ruler with

flowers and trophy accordions. Adult people listened to this fairy tale - and forgot everything they saw with their own eyes, and when the bloodthirsty and vile storyteller died (or was promptly poisoned by his comrades in the Politburo), millions of people sobbed and fought in hysterics ...

Khrushchev was not afraid to change a lot in the country, which he unexpectedly led himself. He took a big risk when he returned millions of prisoners from Kolyma, he took a big risk when, in a meeting of his accomplices, he publicly called crimes crimes. He was not even afraid to pull Stalin's mummy out of the mausoleum and burn it. But Khrushchev did not change the official version of the history of the war, did not dare to conduct a serious and impartial investigation of the real causes of the military disaster of 1941. And why? To establish the truth? The biography of Comrade Khrushchev was such that he hardly remembered and understood the meaning of this word. To punish the guilty? Without any investigation, it was clear that among the main culprits would be Zhukov, without whom Khrushchev would not have remained in power, and Khrushchev himself, as one of Stalin's loyal followers. But the main culprit, any impartial investigation would call the communist regime, which Khrushchev was by no means going to destroy. Therefore, it was decided to put a big point, more precisely, an exclamation mark, which from now on filled hundreds of pages of millions of volumes of "military history studies." And even in those cases when a serious work of a Western historian was translated and published under the heading "For official use" in a meager edition, a stern warning appeared on the first page: "Because of his limitations and class affiliation, the author was unable to point to the true sources of high *moral qualities of Soviet soldiers - the strength and great advantages of the socialist social and state system, the friendship of the peoples of the USSR,*

Soviet patriotism and proletarian internationalism, the undivided leadership of the Communist Party in all aspects of the country's life during the war years. However, other

writings of Western historians do not need agitprop commentary. The notorious "political correctness", on which the modern world is quietly going crazy, coupled with the senile disease of "leftism" of Western intellectuals, contributed to an absolutely uncritical perception and reproduction of the military-historical myths of Soviet propaganda far, far from Moscow. "Despite all counterarguments and already at a time *when Comrade Stalin was long exposed as a criminal against humanity, and the Soviet Union was going to ruin, back in October 1991, in an international conference organized by the Bundeswehr said* Research Center for Military History in Freiburg, it was about the "mass heroism, courage and stamina" shown by all, without exception, the Red Army from the very beginning of the war. If such statements were received unquestioningly, even with applause in an audience that was supposed to claim competence and scientificity, then what can be expected from the general public, whose historical knowledge is mainly based only on superficial reports, perhaps even less informed, but on the other hand politically unambiguously oriented journalism? (42, p. 95)

If the relatively free Western press deserves such a description in this matter, then what should be called what for decades has been attacking the consciousness of Soviet people from all the "red corners"? Let us not, however, exaggerate the role of propaganda beyond measure and reason. Propaganda is believed when they really want to believe in it. "Ah, it's not difficult to deceive me - I myself am glad to be deceived ..." Dumb and primitive Soviet propaganda was not always believed. No matter how much they talked on radio and TV about the "decay of the West and the third stage of the general crisis of capitalism", and the people strove to fade away to this very "decaying West" - if not forever, then at least on a tour for jeans and a Japanese "two-cassette recorder" ". No matter how much knowledgeable experts and moderately decent politicians have warned that a market economy is not a milky river with jelly banks, and in a competitive struggle

can "win friendship", no one heard them and did not believe them. To this day, only those who really want to believe in them believe in the heroic myths of Soviet history. And what else, besides scary tales, can amuse that part of the modern Russian public, in which the "inferiority complex", caused by the country's progressive lag behind not only Western Europe, but also from the rapidly developing states of Asia and Latin America, is intricately intertwined with great-power, imperial ambitions. What else can they be proud of? The current status, pardon the expression, of a "great energy power"? Moscow offices built from Finnish and Italian materials on German equipment by Turkish builders, in which several thousand "middle managers" wipe down imported chairs, counting on a Chinese computer the income from the export of Russian oil? The truth does not win - the truth remains. A genuine, unbiased chronicle of the Great Patriotic War based on documents and facts will certainly

be written. When? The answer to this question is very simple. Not earlier, but not later than the end of the current, fairly protracted "Time of Troubles", and Russia will finally take its rightful place in the general ranks of civilized countries. Only then will we be able to honestly admit that in the history of our country there were not only glorious victories, but also shameful defeats.

APPS

Annex No. 1

Military terms and definitions

1. The structure of the ground forces

Ground forces were the backbone of the Armed Forces of the USSR and Germany. In relation to Germany, they are designated by the word "**Wehrmacht**". As for the Soviet Union, the terms "**Red Army**", the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, the Red Army can refer both to all the Armed Forces, and only to the ground forces. **Military aviation** (Air Force, Air Force) of Germany is usually

denoted by the word "**Luftwaffe**". A characteristic specific feature of the Luftwaffe was the inclusion of ground-based air defense (air defense) forces in its composition, that is, anti-aircraft, searchlight, and radar units.

2. Subdivisions, units, formations

The primary "cell" of the military structure is **the POLK**. This is a military **unit** that has its own individual number and its own banner. Structural **subdivisions** within the regiment (in descending order of personnel strength), battalion, company, platoon, squad. Units do not have their own "personal" numbers and are designated by ordinal numbers, for example: "the third platoon of the second company of the first battalion of the 486th rifle regiment." Approximate number of personnel of rifle units and subunits: - Regiment 3-4 thousand people; - a battalion of 700-800 people; - a company of 200 people; - a platoon of 50 people;

- department of 10

people. In the Red Army there were rifle regiments (**sp**), motorized rifle regiments (**smp**), tank regiments (**tp**). Artillery regiments, depending on the type of equipment used and weapons, were sometimes designated as "cannon artillery regiment" (pap) or "howitzer artillery regiment" (gap). The divisions of an artillery regiment are called **a division** and **a battery**. The composition and strength of the weapons of an artillery regiment are very different, and only by way of example can the following typical structure be given:

- 4 guns in one battery - 12

guns in one division (three batteries) - 36 or

48 guns in a regiment (three to four divisions). Several

regiments were combined into the main tactical formation - **the DIVISION**. So, in the composition of the rifle division (sd) of the Red Army there were three rifle and two artillery regiments, 14,483 personnel. The motorized division of the Red Army included two rifle, one tank and one artillery regiment. Along with divisions (the main tactical unit), the Red Army had **brigades** (rifle, tank, artillery). A brigade is smaller than a division, usually consisting of 2-3 regiments (or 4-5 separate battalions). Several divisions were combined into a rifle **corps (SC)**. The Red Army rifle

corps did not have a fixed strength and could include from two to four rifle divisions. In addition, the corps included **reinforcement units** (one or two artillery regiments, an anti-aircraft division, a pontoon-bridge battalion, etc.). The mechanized corps (**MK**) included two tank and one motorized divisions, a separate motorcycle regiment, and reinforcement

units. In relation to the Wehrmacht, the same terms and abbreviations are used, only instead of the term "rifle" the term "infantry" is used:

infantry regiment (**pp**). infantry division (**pd**). The infantry division of the Wehrmacht consisted of 16,589 personnel, including three infantry and one artillery regiment, several separate battalions and divisions. An analogue of the rifle corps in the Wehrmacht is designated by the term "army corps" (AK). Tank

Wehrmacht corps (**TK**) did not have a fixed structure, as a rule, the Wehrmacht TK included two tank and one - two motorized divisions.

Several corps were combined into a large unit - **the ARMY**. In the text of the book, they are designated as follows: 5th Army, 10th Army ... In peacetime, the Army was the largest unit in the Red Army. During the war (or on the eve of the planned war), several armies, separate divisions and corps were united into the most powerful unit - the front. In the Wehrmacht, the analogue of the "front" was a large formation called **the Army Group**. Three army groups were deployed for the invasion of the Soviet Union: "North" (with the task of advancing through the Baltic states to Leningrad), "Center" (for an attack on Minsk-Smolensk) and "South" (to capture Ukraine and, in cooperation with the Romanian army, Moldova).

In the tank forces of the Red Army there were no formations of a higher level than the mechanized corps (mechanized corps). In the Wehrmacht, four tank groups (**TGr**) were formed: the 1st TGr as part of the South Army Group, the 2nd and 3rd as part of the Center Army Group and the 4th TGr as part of the North Army Group. They included two (4th and 3rd tank groups) or three (2nd and 1st tank groups) tank corps.

3. Artillery and mortars

Barrel artillery guns are divided into two main classes: **GUNS** and **HOWitzers**. The main external difference is the length of the barrel: the guns have a long barrel (40–50 calibers), while the howitzers have a short barrel (20–30 calibers). The different length of the barrel determines the decisive difference in the value of the muzzle velocity of the projectile: 650–750 m/s for guns, 350–500 m/s for howitzers. Of course, **the projectile** does not accelerate the barrel itself, but **the propellant charge**, which in a cannon **artillery shot** (the main elements of an artillery shot are a projectile, a fuse and a propellant charge) is much more powerful than in a howitzer artillery shot. Greater power (i.e., greater weight of gunpowder) of a cannon artillery shot entails more

weight and dimensions of the bolt, barrel, recoil and all other components and assemblies of the gun. As a result, the gun weighs several times more than a howitzer of the same caliber. For example, the most massive M-30 howitzer in the Red Army of 122 mm caliber weighed (in combat position, i.e. without taking into account the weight of the artillery limber - a two-wheeled cart on which the gun beds rest during movement) 2,200 kg, and the A-19 gun of the same caliber 122 mm

weighed 7,080 kg in firing position. The high muzzle velocity of the cannon projectile makes it possible to provide a significantly greater firing range (for example, the maximum firing range of a 122 mm howitzer was 8.9 km, and that of a 122 mm A-19 gun was 20.4 km). When firing at short distances, the gun (due to the high muzzle velocity of the projectile) makes it possible to conduct aimed shooting "**direct fire**" (the flight path of the projectile is almost straight and almost parallel to the ground surface). Howitzers, on the other hand, shoot **with "overhead fire"** (the projectile is thrown at an angle of 30–45 degrees to the horizon and flies along a parabola), which in some cases is an important tactical advantage (the ability to fire at invisible targets on the reverse slopes of heights, defeat enemy

manpower hidden in trenches and trenches). A kind of artillery pieces were the so-called **regimental and mountain**

guns. These are light, short-barreled guns with a low (more typical for howitzers) muzzle velocity, but intended (unlike howitzers) for both mounted firing and direct fire at short (400–500 m) distances. **MORTAR** is a tubular guide for launching an unguided rocket

(mine). And although this "guide" is closed from below and, accordingly, the mortar tube is loaded with the pressure of gases ejected from the nozzle of the rocket engine of the mine, this pressure is several orders of magnitude less than the pressure inside the barrel of an artillery gun. As a result, the mortar barrel (and the entire system as a whole) is many times lighter. So, for example, a 120-mm mortar weighed (in combat position) only 275 kg. The disadvantages (or features) of mortars include low firing accuracy (large dispersion of mines due to instability of speed and flight path), the fundamental impossibility of firing

direct fire even at minimum distances, significantly less (compared to cannon artillery shells of the same caliber) weight of the explosive charge and, accordingly, less damaging effect

4. Anti-tank guns and armor-piercing shells.

To combat tanks (and other armored targets), special types of guns were developed - **anti-tank guns**. As long as the main type of **armor-piercing projectile** was a steel "blank" that pierced the armor of a tank due to its kinetic energy, the main requirement for an anti-tank gun was the maximum possible muzzle velocity of the projectile. Structurally, this required an exceptionally long barrel (60 or more calibers). High armor penetration is the most important, but not the only requirement for an anti-tank gun and armor-piercing projectile. The tank is capable of maneuvering both operationally (tanks can suddenly appear at an unpredictable point of the front) and tactically (directly on the battlefield). Accordingly, the means of combating a tank (anti-tank gun) should have the maximum possible ability to maneuver with "wheels and fire". This means that an anti-tank gun must be light enough so that the gun crew can manually (in the truest sense of the word) deploy it in a firing position, roll it to another position. In addition, the wheel drive must allow the anti-tank gun to be towed over rough terrain at high speed. All of the above led to the fact that relatively small (37 / 57 mm) caliber guns were used as anti-tank guns, but with long barrels, which made it possible to obtain an initial projectile

velocity from 750 to 1150 m / s (this is 3.3 times higher than the speed of sound). In the initial period of World War II, even smaller caliber systems were widely used: 20/25 mm anti-tank guns and 8/15 mm anti-tank rifles. However, the further development of armored vehicles

made useless not only ultra-light systems, but also the most common 37, 45, 50-mm anti-tank guns. By the end of the war, the caliber of anti-tank guns had grown to 75/88 mm. This made it possible to completely solve the problem of armor penetration (the German 88-mm Pak-43 anti-tank gun pierced armor 180 mm thick at short ranges), but the weight of the gun went beyond all reasonable limits (Pak-43 weighed 3,700 kg, which made it practically immobile on the battlefield). In fact, anti-tank artillery reached a dead end, a way out of which became possible only after the development of cumulative striking elements, for which the speed of delivery of the projectile to the armor no longer mattered, which made it possible in the post-war period to replace the anti-tank gun with an unguided rocket (anti-tank grenade launcher) or remotely controlled missile (ATGM).

5. Tanks, wedges, self-propelled guns, armored vehicles, armored personnel carriers.

TANK is a combat vehicle with three characteristic features: -

armored hull; - caterpillar

mover; - a gun (cannon)

in a rotating turret. **Flamethrower** (or

"chemical") tanks were quite common at the beginning of World War II. Instead of a cannon, a device was installed in the rotating turret of such a tank, capable of ejecting several liters of liquid (fire mixture or liquid mustard agents) at a distance of 50–80 m. Placing an artillery piece inside a rotating turret of limited dimensions is a very difficult engineering problem. Therefore, tanks at the beginning of the war were armed with small-caliber guns (37/50 mm) or

short-barreled (with a short range of aimed fire) guns of 75/76 mm caliber. Combat

the use showed that guns with such parameters are not enough to effectively support infantry on the battlefield. Therefore, armored tracked vehicles of a new type were developed - **SELF-PROPELLED GUNS** ("assault guns", self-propelled artillery mounts, self-propelled guns). The external difference between the self-propelled guns and the tank is the absence of a rotating turret (the gun is installed in a fixed conning tower, sometimes even open from the stern). All types of self-propelled guns can be divided into two groups: infantry support guns and tank destroyers. In the first case, the armament consists of a powerful cannon (or howitzer up to 152 mm caliber) and machine guns, in the second case, the self-propelled guns were armed with an anti-tank gun and were especially heavily armored. In the 1930s, light **tankettes** (small tanks) with machine-gun armament were mass-produced. In the Soviet Union, such tankettes (T-37 / T-38 / T-40), intended for use in reconnaissance units of tank and rifle divisions, also had the ability to move on water (**amphibious tanks**). However, as the infantry was saturated with anti-tank defense equipment, the use of tankettes became less and less possible. By the end of World War II, they

practically disappeared as an independent class of combat vehicles. **ARMORED VEHICLE** is a wheeled closed armored fighting vehicle with machine-gun (and in some cases cannon) armament. The most powerful armored vehicles were the Soviet BA-10s, based on the chassis of a three-axle off-road vehicle and armed with a 45-mm cannon in a rotating light tank turret. Despite powerful (for their time) armament, cannon armored vehicles were not widely used, as they were much inferior to tanks in cross-country ability. On the other hand, a wide variety of models of light armored vehicles (reconnaissance, commander, radio communications) were

successfully used throughout the war. **The armored vehicle**, although it was often developed on the chassis of the same car as the armored vehicle, was radically different from the latter both in purpose and in appearance. Armored personnel carriers during the Second World War were, as a rule, open wh

with light machine gun weapons (or no weapons at all). They were designed to transport personnel of motorized rifle units of tank (motorized) divisions. The armored personnel carrier of that period was not an infantry fighting vehicle (IFV), its task was only to bring the motorized infantry to the deployment area, and on the battlefield the motorized infantry moved independently (i.e., on foot).

Appendix No. 2

Composition and armament of the tank troops of the Wehrmacht and the Red Army, who took part in the hostilities in the period from June 22 to July 10

Группа армий «Север»		Северо-Западный фронт	
4-я танковая группа			
41 ТК (1 тд, 6 тд)	390/114/155/121	12 МК (23 тд, 28 тд, 202 мсд)	730/0
56 ТК (8тд)	212/64/118/30	3 МК (2 тд, 5 тд, 84 мсд)	672/110
		1 МК (3 тд, 163 мсд)	666/5
		21 МК (42 тд, 46 тд, 185 мсд)	120/0
всего танков:	602		2188
Группа армий «Центр»		Западный фронт	
3- я танковая группа			
39 ТК (7 тд, 20 тд)	494/145/288/61	11 МК (29 тд, 33 тд, 204 мсд)	414/20
57 ТК (12 тд, 19 тд)	448/169/219/60	6 МК (4 тд, 7 тд,29 мсд)	1131/452
		13 МК (25 тд, 31 тд,208 мсд)	282/0
2- я танковая группа			
47 ТК (17 тд, 18 тд)	420/134/99/187	14 МК (22 тд, 30 тд, 205 мсд)	518/0
46 ТК (10 тд)	182/57/0/125/	7 МК (14 тд, 18 тд, 1 мсд)	959/103
24 ТК (3 тд, 4 тд)	392/125/60/207	5 МК (13 тд, 17 тд)	861/17
		отдельная 57 тд	200/0
всего танков:	1936		4365
Группа армий «Юг»		Юго-Западный и Южный фронты	
1-я танковая группа	296/114/42/140	22 МК (19 тд, 41 тд, 215 мсд)	712/31
3 ТК (13 тд, 14тд)	143/52/11/80	15 МК (10 тд, 37 тд, 212 мсд)	749/136
14 ТК (9 тд)		4 МК (8 тд, 32 тд, 81 мсд)	979/414
		8 МК (12 тд, 34 тд, 7 мсд)	899/171
		9 МК (20 тд, 35 тд, 131 мсд)	316/0
		19 МК (40 тд, 43 тд, 213 мсд)	453/3
		16 МК (15 тд, 39 тд, 240 мсд)	478/4
		24 МК (45 тд, 49 тд, 216 мсд)	222/0
		5 МК (109 мсд)	209/0
		2 МК (11 тд,16 тд,15 мсд)	527/60
		18 МК (44 тд, 47 тд, 218 мсд)	282/0
всего танков:		728	
ИТОГО	3266 танков 1081 танкетка		12379 танков
в том числе	1039 лёгких танков 1146 средних танков	в том числе	1528 Т-34 и КВ

Notes: 1.

The number of tanks in the formations of the Wehrmacht is indicated as follows: total tanks in the hull / tankettes / light tanks / medium

tanks/.

2. The category of "tankettes" includes Pz-I, Pz-II and "commander tanks" armed with machine guns; among the "light tanks": Czech Pz-38 (t) and Pz-II of the first series with a 37-mm gun; among the "medium tanks": Pz-III with a 50-mm gun and Pz-IV. 3. The

number of tanks in the mechanized corps of the Red Army is indicated as follows: total tanks in the mechanized corps / including T-34 and KV.

4. The number of 1 MK is indicated without taking into account the 1st TD, which was before end of July 1941 in the Arctic.

5. The table does not take into account 17 MK and 20 MK of the Western Front, which were in the process of formation, and 10 MK (Leningrad IN), operating on the front of the war with Finland.

6. In accordance with the actual course of hostilities, 109 md (5 MK) is included in the troops of the Southwestern Front, respectively, the number of tanks in 5 MK is indicated without taking into account the number of 109 md.

7. All figures

characterizing the composition and armament of the mechanized corps of the Red Army. should be regarded as indicative only. In different sources, they differ by 10–15–20%. This, in particular, also applies to the number of new types of tanks (KV and T-34), which continuously entered service with the units. So, for example, in the table above, there are no new types of tanks in the 21st MK, but in the combat documents of the first weeks of the war, KV tanks of the 21st mechanized corps are mentioned.

Appendix No. 3

Composition and losses of Wehrmacht tank groups on the Eastern Front

	1-я ТГр	2-я ТГр	3-я ТГр	4-я ТГр	Всего
Наличие на 22 июня 1941 г.	66	919	780	563	2 928
Безвозвратные потери	71	235	233	121	760
Получено новых танков	20	25	42	2	89
Наличие боеготовых танков на 4 - 10 сентября	327	344	362	373	1 406
Наличие временно неисправных танков	187	378	223	71	859

Note: the presence and losses of tankettes Pz-I and command tanks Pz. Bef.

	Pz-II	Pz-35/ 38(t)	Pz-III	Pz-IV	Всего
Наличие на 22 июня 1941 г.	743	780	966	439	2 928
Безвозвратные потери	152	231	252	125	760
Получено новых танков	0	44	35	10	89
Наличие боеготовых танков на 4 - 10 сентября	458	393	362	193	1 406
Наличие временно неисправных танков	146	193	387	133	859

Note: the presence and losses of tankettes Pz-I and command tanks Pz. Bef.

Appendix No. 4

Availability and separation of tanks of the Red Army on June 1, 1941

	KB	T-34	T-28	BT-5/7	T-26	Всего
Западные округа	473	837	432	4 656	5 103	11 501
Дальний Восток	0	0	0	1 757	3 017	4 774
Внутренние округа	31	55	10	409	1 393	1 898
Всего:	504	892	442	6 822	9 513	18 173

Note: -

Leningradsky is included in the "Western districts". The Baltic, Western, Kiev, Odessa, and also the Moscow Military District, whose mechanized corps (7 MK and 21 MK) took part in the hostilities of the first weeks of the war. - the total

number of BT-5/7 tanks included 704 BT-7M tanks with diesel engines - by July 1,

1941, the total number of new types of tanks produced was 636 KV and 1225 T-34; - in addition, the

Red Army was armed with 59 heavy five-tower T-35 tanks, 589 light BT-2 tanks, 3,447 T-37/38/40 amphibious tankettes, 3,258 BA-10 armored vehicles armed with a 45-mm cannon; - according to the so-called "re-accounted data"

of the GABTU of the Red Army, the total number of tanks on January 1, 1941 was 7,817 BT and 11,090 T-26

Annex No. 5 The main performance characteristics of the tanks of the Red Army and the Wehrmacht

	KB	T-34	T-28	Pz-IV F	Pz-III J	BT-7	Pz-38(t)	T-26	Pz-II C
Вес, тонн	48	28,5	27,8	22,3	21,6	13,8	9,4	9,75	9,5
Калибр пушки, мм	76,2	76,2	76,2	75	50	45	37	45	20
Броня, лоб/борт, мм	75 - 75	45 - 40	30 - 20	50 - 30	50 - 30	20 - 15	5 - 15	15 - 15	30 - 20
Мощность л.с.	600	500	500	300	300	450	125	90	140
Скорость, км/час	35/16	50/25	40/20	42/20	40/20	2/52(72)	42/15	30/15	45/25
Запас хода, шоссе, км	250	300	220	200	143	375(460)	250	180	190

Note: in the "Speed" line, the first digit is the maximum speed on the highway, the second is the average speed on the country road.

Application No. 6

Separation of ammunition as of June 22, 1941 as a percentage of the total

	Западные округа	Дальний Восток	Внутренние округа	Запасы центра	Всего в РККА, %%/млн. шт.
Артиллерийские выстрелы	44	23	13	20	100/62,3
Миномётные выстрелы	61	13	17	9	100/24,9
Винтовочные патроны	46	26	17	11	100/6 809

Dynamics of receipt, loss and combat consumption of artillery ammunition in 1941

Боеприпасы (млн. шт) к:	Наличие 22.06.41 г.	боевой расход	небоевые потери	общая убыль	получено 1.06-31.12	наличие на 01.01.42	k-
Миномёт 50-мм	14,51	4,06	3,28	7,34	7,57	14,74	1,02
миномёт 82-мм	11,34	3,80	4,36	8,16	3,77	6,95	0,61
45-мм противотанковая пушка	25,65	4,74	7,13	11,87	7,02	20,80	0,81
76-мм полковая пушка	4,90	2,21	2,50	4,71	1,52	1,71	0,35
76-мм дивизионная Пушка	8,78	2,47	2,25	4,72	1,93	5,99	0,68
122-мм гаубица	6,56	1,78	2,32	4,10	2,62	5,08	0,77
152-мм гаубица *	2,64	0,63	0,61	1,24	0,93	2,33	0,88
76-мм зенитная пушка	5,03	0,59	0,86	1,43	1,72	5,30	1,05

**excluding shots for the 152 mm howitzer gun*

1941 standards for the consumption of ammunition "On the day of intense battle", per one unit of weapons, pieces:

Винтовка *	29
Ручной пулемёт *	620
Станковый пулемёт *	1 400
Зенитная пушка 76-мм	84
Противотанковая пушка 45-мм	80
Полковая пушка 76-мм	100
Дивизионная пушка 76-мм	180
Гаубица 122-мм	88
Гаубица 152-мм	72
Гаубица-пушка 152-мм	00 (???)
* норматив 1938 г	

Source: "Artillery supply in the Great Patriotic war of 1941-45, Moscow-Tula, GAU publishing house, 1977, v. 1

Application No. 7

Treaty of friendship and border between the USSR and Germany

Moscow

September 28, 1939

After the collapse of the former Polish state, the government of the USSR and the German government consider it solely as their task to restore peace and order in this territory and to ensure a peaceful existence for the peoples living there, corresponding to their national characteristics. To this end, they came to an agreement as follows: **Article I** The Government of the USSR and the German Government establish as the boundary between

mutual state interests in the territory of the former Polish state a line, which is marked on the attached map and will be described in more detail in an additional protocol. **Article II** Both Parties recognize the boundary of mutual state interests established in Article I as final and eliminate any interference of third powers in this decision.

Article III

The necessary state reconstruction in the territory to the west of the line indicated in the article is carried out by the German government, in the territory to the east of this line - by the Government of the USSR. **Article IV** The Government of the

USSR and

the German Government consider the above reorganization as a reliable foundation for the further development of friendly relations between their peoples.

Article V

This treaty is subject to ratification. Exchange of ratification
The charters should take place as soon as possible in Berlin.

The agreement comes into force from the moment of its signing. Compiled in
two originals, in German and Russian.

By authorization of the Government of the USSR V.

Molotov For the Government of Germany *I. Ribbentrop*.

<i>Secret Additional Protocol to the Treaty of Friendship and Boundary</i>

Moscow

September 28, 1939

The undersigned Plenipotentiaries, when concluding the Soviet-German
Treaty on the Border and Friendship, stated their agreement to the following:

Both sides will not allow any Polish agitation on their territories that affects
the territory of another country. They will eradicate the germs of such agitation in
their territories and will inform each other about the appropriate measures for this.

By authorization of the Government of the USSR V.

Molotov For the Government of Germany *J. Ribbentrop*

Statement by the governments of the USSR and

Germany

After the German Government and the Government of the USSR, by the
treaty signed today, finally settled the issues that arose as a result of the collapse
of the Polish state, and thus created a solid foundation for a lasting peace in
Eastern Europe, they mutually agree that the elimination of a real war between
Germany and on the one hand, and England and France on the other, would meet
the interests of all peoples. Therefore, both Governments will direct their common
efforts, in case of need in agreement with other friendly powers, in order to
achieve this goal as soon as possible.

If, however, these efforts of both Governments remain unsuccessful, then the fact will be established that England and France are responsible for the continuation of the war, and in the event of a continuation of the war, the Governments of Germany and the USSR will consult with each other on the necessary measures. **September 28, 1939** By authorization of the Government of the USSR *V. Molotov* For the Government of Germany *I. Ribbentrop*.

Statement by the German Foreign Minister Mr. von Ribbentrop

September 30, 1939

Before leaving Moscow, German Foreign Minister Mr. von Ribbentrop made the following statement to a TASS officer:

"My stay in Moscow was again short, unfortunately too short. Next time I hope to stay here longer. Nevertheless, we made good use of these two days. The following was clarified: 1. German-Soviet friendship has now been finally

established. 2. Both sides will never allow third powers to interfere in Eastern European issues. 3. Both states want peace to be restored and that England and France stop the absolutely senseless and hopeless struggle against Germany. 4. If, however, warmongers prevail in these countries,

then Germany and the USSR will know how to respond to this.

The Minister went on to point to the agreement reached yesterday between the Government of Germany and the Government of the USSR on an extensive economic program which would benefit both Powers. In conclusion, Mr. von Ribbentrop stated: *"The negotiations took place in a particularly friendly and excellent atmosphere. However, first of all, I would like to note the extremely cordial reception extended to me by the Soviet government, and in particular by Messrs. Stalin and Molotov.*

Annex No. 8

Counter-proposals of the Soviet government on the conditions for the USSR to join the Tripartite Pact

Handed over by the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars V. M. Molotov to the German Ambassador to the USSR Schulenburg on November 25, 1940.

The USSR basically agrees to accept the draft four-power pact on their political cooperation and mutual economic assistance, set out by Mr. Ribbentrop in his conversation with V. M. Molotov in Berlin on November 13, 1940, and consisting of 4 points, under the following conditions:

1. If the German troops will now be withdrawn from Finland, which represents the sphere of influence of the USSR in accordance with the Soviet-German Agreement of 1939, and the USSR undertakes to ensure peaceful relations with Finland, as well as the economic interests of Germany in Finland (export of timber,

nickel); 2. If in the coming months the security of the USSR in the Straits is ensured by concluding a pact of mutual assistance between the USSR and Bulgaria, which, by its geographical position, is in the sphere of security of the Black Sea borders of the USSR, and the organization of a military and naval base of the USSR in the area of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles on the basis of a long-term rent;

3. If the region south of Batumi and Baku in the general direction to the Persian Gulf is recognized as the center of the territorial aspirations of the

USSR; 4. If Japan gives up its coal concession rights and oil in Northern Sakhalin on terms of fair compensation.

In accordance with the foregoing, the draft protocol to the Four-Power Treaty, presented by Mr. Ribbentrop, on the delimitation of spheres of influence in the spirit of determining the center of the USSR's territorial aspirations south of Batum and Baku in the general direction to the Persian Gulf, should be changed.

Similarly, the draft Protocol or Agreement between Germany, Italy and the USSR and Turkey set out by Mr. Ribbentrop should be changed in the spirit of securing the military and naval base of the USSR near the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles on the basis of a long-term lease. Moreover, if Turkey agrees to join the Four Power Pact, the three powers (Germany, Italy, USSR) guarantee the independence and territorial integrity of Turkey. This protocol should provide that in the event of Turkey's refusal to join the four powers, Germany,

Italy and the USSR agree to develop and implement the necessary military and diplomatic measures, on which a special agreement should be concluded.

agreement.

Likewise, the following should be adopted: -

the third secret protocol between the USSR and Germany on Finland; - the fourth secret

protocol between the USSR and Japan on Japan's refusal of coal and oil concessions in Northern Sakhalin; - the fifth secret protocol between the USSR, Germany

and Italy with the recognition that Bulgaria, due to its geographical location, is in the security sphere of the Black Sea borders of the USSR, in connection with which it is considered politically necessary to conclude a mutual assistance pact between the USSR and Bulgaria, which in no way measure should not affect either the internal regime of Bulgaria, or its sovereignty and independence.

Appendix No. 9

Considerations on the plan for the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union in the event of a war with Germany and its allies

Only personally. The instance is the only one.

Chairman of the Council of People's

Commissars of the USSR comrade. Stalin.

I am reporting for your consideration the considerations on the plan for the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union in the event of a war with Germany and its allies.

I. Currently, Germany *<according to the Intelligence Directorate of the Red Army>*[1] has about 230 infantry, 22 tank, 20 motorized, 8 air and 4 cavalry divisions deployed, and a total of about 284 divisions. Of these, on the borders of the Soviet Union, as of May 15, 1941, up to 86 infantry, 13 tank, 12

motorized and 1 cavalry divisions were concentrated, and in total up to 112 divisions. It is assumed that in today's political situation, Germany, in the event of an attack on the USSR, will be able to put up to 137 infantry, 19 tank, 15 motorized, 4 cavalry and 5 airborne divisions against us, and in total up to 180 divisions. The remaining 104 divisions will be located *<in the center of the country in reserve 22 infantry division, 1 cd, 1 airborne division, 1 airborne division, a total of 25 divisions; in Denmark. Belgium, Holland and France - 40 pd, 2 cd, 1 td,*

2 air. dec. div., total 45 divisions; Yugoslavia - 7 infantry divisions, 7 divisions in total; Greece - 7 pd, 1 cd, 8 divisions in total; Bulgaria - 3 infantry divisions, only 3 divisions; Africa - 5 pd, 1 cd. 1 TD, total 7 divisions; Norway - 9 infantry divisions, 9 divisions in total; total 9Zpd, 5 cd, 3 td, 3 air. dec. divisions; total 104 divisions > [in the center of the country on the western borders, in Norway, Africa, Greece and Italy].

Most likely, the main forces of the German army, consisting of 76 infantry, 11 tank, 8 motorized, 2 cavalry and 5 air divisions, and in total up to 100 divisions, will be deployed south of Demblin to strike in the direction of Kovel, Rovno, Kiev. This blow will apparently be accompanied by a blow in the north from East Prussia to Vilna and Riga, as well as short, concentric blows from Suwalki and Brest to Volkovysk, Baranovichi. In the south, one should expect strikes [simultaneous with the German army to go on the offensive in the general direction to Zhmerinka — the Romanian army, supported by German divisions. The possibility of an auxiliary attack by the Germans from behind the river is also not excluded. San in the direction of Lviv] <a) in the direction of Zhmerinka - the Romanian army, supported by German divisions; b) in the direction of Munkach, Lviv; c) Sanok, Lviv >.

Probable allies of Germany can put up against the USSR: Finland - up to 20 infantry divisions, Hungary - 15 infantry divisions, Romania - up to 25 infantry divisions. In total, Germany with its allies can deploy up to 240

divisions against the USSR. Considering that Germany currently keeps its army mobilized, with its rear deployed, it has the ability to warn us in the deployment and launch a surprise attack. In order to prevent this [and defeat the German army], I consider it necessary in no case to give the initiative of action to the German command, to preempt the enemy in deployment and attack the German army at a time when it will be in the deployment stage and will not have time to organize the front and interaction types of troops.

II. The first strategic goal of the actions of the Red Army troops was to defeat the main forces of the German army deployed south of Deblin, and reach the front of Ostrolenka, r. Narew, Lovich, Lodz, Kreutzburg, Oppeln, Olomouc. *<The next strategic goal is to have: an offensive from the Katowice region in the northern or northwestern direction to defeat the large forces of the Center and the Northern wing of the German front and seize the territory of former Poland and East Prussia. The immediate task is to defeat the German army east of the river. Vistula and in the Krakow direction, go to the river. Narew, Vistula and*

seize the Katowice area >, for which: a)

deliver the main blow by the forces of the Southwestern Front in the direction of Krakow, Katowice, cutting off Germany from its southern allies;

b) deliver an auxiliary strike by the left wing of the Western Front in the direction of Sedlec, Demblin, with the aim of pinning down the Warsaw grouping and assisting the Southwestern Front in defeating the enemy's Lublin grouping; c) conduct an active

defense against Finland, East Prussia, Hungary and Romania and be ready to strike against Romania if the situation is favorable.

<Thus, the Red Army will begin offensive operations from the front of Chizhov, Lutovisko with the forces of 152 divisions against 100 German divisions. In the remaining sections of the state border, active defense is envisaged>.

III. Based on this strategic deployment plan, the following grouping of the Armed Forces of the USSR is envisaged:

1. The ground forces of the Red Army consisting of - 198 rifle divisions, 61 rifle divisions, 31 rifle divisions, 13 rifle divisions (total 303 divisions and 74 artillery regiments of

the RGK) should be distributed as follows: (total 258 divisions) and 53 artillery regiments of the RGK to have in the West, of which as part of the Northern, Northwestern, Western and Southwestern fronts - 136 rifle divisions, 44 TD, 23 MD, 7 cd (210 divisions in total) and 53 artillery regiments of the RGK ; as part of the reserve of the High Command behind the South-Western and Western fronts - 27 rifle divisions, 14 rifle divisions,

7 melee divisions (48 divisions in total); b) The rest of the forces, consisting of 35 RD, 3 TD, 1 MD, 6 CD (45 divisions in total) and 21 AP RGK, are assigned to defend the Far Eastern,

southern and northern borders of the USSR, of which: - in the Far East and in the ZabVO - 22 SD,

3 TD, 1 MD, 1 CD (total 27 divisions) and 14 AP RGK; - in Central Asia - 2 mountain

rifle and 3 cavalry. divisions (total 5 divisions); - in Transcaucasia - 8 rifle and 2 cavalry divisions

(10 divisions in total) and 2 ap RGK; - on the defense of the Black Sea coast of the North Crimea - 2 divisions;

- on the coast of the White Sea - 1 page division. detailed the grouping of forces is shown on the attached map.

2. The Air Force of the Red Army, as part of the currently available and combat-ready 97 IAP, 75 BBP, 11 SAP, 29 DBP and 6 TBP (total 218 air regiments) should be distributed as follows:

a) The main forces, consisting of 66 IAP, 64 BBP, 5 SAP, 25 DBP, 5 TBP (total 165 air regiments) deploy in the West, of which: -

as part of the Northern, North-Western, Western and South-Western Fronts - 63 IAP, 64 bbp, 5 cap, 11 dbp and 1 tbp, a total of 144 air regiments;

- as part of

the reserve of the High Command for the South-Western and Western fronts - 14 dbp and 4 tbp, a total of 21 air regiments;

b) The rest of the forces, consisting of 31 IAP, 11 BBP, 6 BHAP, 4 DBP and 1 TBP - a total of 53 air regiments should be left on the defense of the Far Eastern, southern and northern borders and the air

defense point of the mountains. Moscow, of which: - in the Far East and in the ZabVO - 14 IAP, 9

BBP, 5 Shap, 4 LBP and 1 TBP, a total of 33 air regiments; - in SaVO - 1 IAP and 1 cap, only 2 air regiments; - in ZakVO - 9 IAP, 2

BBP, a total of 11 air regiments; - in the ArchVO - 1 page. air regiment On the defense of the city of Moscow - 6 fighter

regiments. The detailed grouping of forces is shown on the attached map. In addition to these Air Forces, today there are 52 IAP, 30 BBP, 4 SAP, 7 DBP and 71 DIP, in the formation stage and not yet combat-ready, a total of 115 air regiments, the full readiness of which can

be expected by 1.1.42. These air regiments as soon as they are ready, it is planned to distribute

as follows: - to assign 41 IAP, 30 BBP, 4 SAP, 5 DBP, 14 DIP to the West, and a total of 94

air regiments, of which: - to the fronts 41 IAP, 33 BBP, 4 SAP, 7 DIP, total 87 air regiments;

- as part of the reserve of the High Command - 4 IAP, 4 DBP, a total of 7 air regiments;

- leave for the Far East Front and ZabOVO 10 and in ZakVO - 6 air regiments;

- on the defense of Moscow - 5 Istr. air regiments. The approximate dates for the entry of these air regiments into operation are according to the table on the maps.

IV. The composition and tasks of the fronts deployed in the West (map 1: 1000.000):

Northern Front (LVO) - 3 armies, consisting of 15 rifle, 4 tank and 2 motorized divisions, and in total

21 divisions, 18 regiments of aviation and the Northern Navy, with the main tasks

- the defense of Leningrad, the port of Murmansk, the Kirov railway. roads and, together with the Baltic Navy, ensure our complete dominance in the waters of the Gulf of Finland. For the same purpose, it is planned to transfer to the Northern Front from PribOVO - the defense of the northern and northwestern coast of the Estonian SSR. The border of the front on the left is Ostashkov, Ostrov, Vyr, Viljandi, Zal. Matasalu, Ezel and Dago Islands exclusively. Front

headquarters - Pargolovo. North-Western Front (PribOVO) - three armies, consisting

of 17 rifle divisions [of which 6 are national], 4 tank, 2 motorized divisions, and a total of 23 divisions and 13 aviation regiments, with the tasks of: firmly covering the Riga and Vilna directions with stubborn defense, preventing the invasion of the enemy from East Prussia; the defense of the western coast and the islands of Ezel and Dago to prevent enemy amphibious landings. Front border on the left - Polotsk, Oshmyany, Druskeniki,

Margherabova, Letzen. Front headquarters - Ponevezh.

Western Front (ZapOVO) - four armies, consisting of 31 rifle, 8 tank, 4 motorized and 2 cavalry divisions, and a total of 45 divisions and 21 aviation regiments. Tasks: - stubborn defense on

the front

of Druskeniki, Ostroleka firmly cover the Lida and Bialystok directions;

- with the transition of the armies of the South-Western Front to the offensive, the blow of the left wing of the front in the directions to "Warsaw", Sedlec. Radom, *<break the Warsaw grouping and capture Warsaw>* [contribute] *<in cooperation with>* the Southwestern Front

break up the Lublin-Radom grouping of the enemy, *<go to the river. Vistula and moving parts to seize Radom >* [and ensure this operation from Warsaw and East Prussia]. The border of the

front on the left - r. Pripyat, Pinsk, Vlodava, Demblin, Radom.

Front

headquarters - Baranovichi.

The Southwestern Front - eight armies, consisting of 74 rifle, 28 tank, 15 motorized and 5 cavalry divisions, and a total of 122 divisions and 91 aviation regiments, with the immediate tasks:

a) with a concentric strike by the armies of the right wing of the front, encircle and destroy the main enemy grouping east of the river. the Vistula in

the Lublin region; b) simultaneously with a blow from the Seniava, Przemysl, Lutowska front, defeat the enemy forces in the Krakow and Sandomierz-Kielce directions and capture the areas of Krakow, Katowice, Kielce, meaning to further advance from this area in the northern or northwestern direction to defeat the large forces of the northern wing front of the enemy and mastery of the territory of former Poland and East

Prussia; c) firmly defend the state border with Hungary and Romania and be ready to launch concentric attacks against Romania from the Chernivtsi and Chisinau regions, with the immediate goal of defeating the northern wing of the Romanian army and reaching the line of the river. Moldova, Iasi. In order to ensure the fulfillment of the plan outlined above, it is necessary to carry out the following measures in advance, without which it is impossible to launch a surprise attack on the enemy both from

the air and on the ground: 1. Covertly mobilize troops under the guise of

reserve training camps; 2. Under the guise of an exit to the camps, make a hidden concentration of troops closer to the western border, first of all, concentrate all the armies

of the reserve of the High Command; 3. Concealedly concentrate aviation on field airfields from remote districts and immediately begin to deploy aviation rear; 4. Gradually, under the guise of training camps and rear exercises, deploy the rear and the hospital base.

V. Grouping of reserves of Smooth Command. In reserve

High Command have 5 armies and concentrate them:

- two armies consisting of 9 rifle, 4 tank and 2 motorized divisions, 15 divisions in total, in the area of Vyazma, Sychevka, Yelnya, Bryansk, Sukhinichi;

- one army consisting of 4 rifle, 2 tank and 2 motorized divisions, and only 8 divisions, in the Vileyka, Novogrudok, Minsk area; - one army consisting of 6 rifle, 4 tank and 2 motorized

- divisions, and a total of 12 divisions, in the Shepetovka, Proskurov, Berdichev area and - one army consisting of 8 rifle, 2 tank and 2 motorized divisions, and a total of 12 divisions, in the areas

- Belaya Tserkov, Zvenigorodka, Cherkasy.

VI. Cover of concentration and deployment. In order to

protect ourselves from a possible surprise attack by the enemy, to cover the concentration and deployment of our troops and prepare them for going on the offensive, it is necessary: for deployment in the west; 2. Develop a detailed plan for the country's air defense

and bring air defense systems to full readiness.

On these issues, I have given orders, and the development of plans for the defense of the state border and air defense is completely completed by 06/01/41. The

composition and grouping of the covering troops are according to the

attached map. *<At the same time necessary construction to speed up the and arming of fortified areas in every possible way, to begin the construction of fortified areas in 1942 on the border with Hungary, and also to continue the construction of fortified areas along the line of the old state border >.*

VII. The tasks of the Navy were set in accordance with the earlier my reports approved by you.

VIII. Deployment of troops and their combat operations available reserves are provided:

on ammunition:

- small-caliber shells for three weeks; - medium-caliber for a month; - heavy-caliber

- for a month; - mines for half a month; for anti-aircraft

- shots: 37 mm - for 5

- days; 76 mm - for a

- month and a half; 85 mm -

- for 11 days; for air

- munitions: - high-

- explosive bombs for a month; -

- armor-piercing for 10 days; -

- concrete-breaking for 10 days;

- fragmentation for a month;

- incendiary for half a month;

- for fuels and lubricants; - gasoline

- B-78 for 10 days; - gasoline

- B-74 for a month; - gasoline

- B-70 for 2.5 months; — gasoline

- for 1.5 months; - diesel fuel for

- a month. Fuel supplies destined for

the western districts are echeloned in a significant amount (due to the lack of capacity on their territory) in the interior districts.

IX. I ask: 1.

Approve the presented plan for the strategic deployment of the Armed Forces of the USSR and the plan for planned military operations in the event of a war with Germany;

2. To timely allow the consistent implementation of covert mobilization and covert concentration in the first place of all the armies of the reserve of the High Command and aviation;

3. Demand from the People's Commissariat of Railways the full and timely completion of the construction of railways according to the plan for 41 years, and especially

in the Lvov direction; 4. To oblige the industry to fulfill the plan for the production of the materiel of tanks and aircraft, as well as the production and supply of ammunition and fuel strictly on time.

<Approve the proposal for the construction of new fortified areas>.

APPLICATIONS.

- Deployment scheme on the map 1: 1000.000 in 1 copy.
- Cover deployment scheme on 3 maps. - Scheme of the balance of power in 1 copy. - Three maps of air force bases in the west.

People's Commissar of Defense of the
USSR Marshal of the Soviet Union S.
Timoshenko Chief of the General Staff
K. A. General of the Army *G. Zhukov*

**Manuscript on the form: "People's Commissar of Defense of the
USSR", made by the hand of A. M. Vasilevsky.
b / n, not earlier than May 15, 1941**

Annex No. 10

Letter from Hitler to Mussolini

June 21, 1941

Duce!

I am writing this letter to you at a time when months of hard thinking, as well as eternal nervous waiting, ended with the most difficult decision in my life. I believe that I have no right to endure the situation any longer after the last map with the situation in Russia was reported to me, and also after reading numerous other reports. First of all, I believe that there is no other way to eliminate this danger. Further waiting will lead to disastrous consequences this or next year at the latest. Situation. England lost this war. With the despair of a drowning woman, she clutches at

every straw, which in her eyes can serve as an anchor of salvation. True, some of her hopes and hopes are not devoid of a certain logic. England has hitherto waged her wars constantly with the help of continental countries. After the destruction of France - in general after the elimination of all their Western European positions - the British warmongers all the time direct their eyes to where they tried to start the war: at the Soviet Union. Both states, Soviet Russia and England, are equally interested in a disintegrated Europe,

weakened by a long war. Behind these states stands the North American Union in a pose of instigator and expectant. After the liquidation of Poland, a consistent trend appears in Soviet Russia, which - cleverly and cautiously, but steadily - returns to the old Bolshevik trend of expanding the Soviet state. The prolongation of the war, necessary for the realization of these goals, is supposed to be achieved by pinning down German forces in the East, so that the German command could not decide on a major offensive in the West, especially in the air. I have already told you, Duce, recently that the well-successful experiment with Crete proved, as necessary in the case of a much larger operation

against England, really use everything to the last plane. In this decisive struggle, it may happen that victory will finally be won by an advantage of only a few squadrons. I will not hesitate for a moment to take this step if, apart from all other prerequisites, I am at least safe from a surprise attack from the East, or even from the threat of such an attack.

The Russians have enormous forces - I ordered General Jodl to hand over to your attache with us, General Maras, the last map with the situation. Actually, all available Russian troops are on our borders. With the onset of warm weather, defensive work is being carried out in many places. If circumstances force me to throw German aircraft against England, there will be a danger that Russia, for its part, will begin to exert pressure in the south and north, before which I will be forced to silently retreat for the simple reason that I will not have air superiority. I could not then launch an offensive against the Russian defenses with the divisions in the East without sufficient air support. If we continue to endure this danger, we will probably have to lose the whole of 1941, and at the same time the general situation will not change in the least. On the contrary, England will be even more opposed to the conclusion of peace, since she will still rely on a Russian partner. In addition, this hope, of course, will increase as the combat readiness of the Russian armed forces increases. And behind all this is the massive American supply

of war material that has been expected since 1942. Not to mention, Duce, it's hard to imagine that we'll be

given that kind of time. For with such a gigantic concentration of forces on both sides - after all, I was forced, on my part, to send more and more tank forces to the eastern border and draw the attention of Finland and Romania to the danger - there is a possibility that at some point the guns will begin to fire themselves. My retreat would have brought us a heavy loss of prestige. This would be especially unpleasant, given the possible impact on Japan. Therefore, after much thought, I came to the conclusion that it is better to break this loop before it is tightened. I believe, Duce, that thereby

I will render this year to our joint conduct of the war perhaps the greatest service possible.

Thus, my assessment of the general situation boils down to next:

1. France is still unreliable. There are no definite guarantees that its North Africa will not suddenly find itself in a hostile camp.

2. If you bear in mind, Duce, your colonies in North Africa, then until spring they are, perhaps, out of any danger. I assume that the British wanted to release Tobruk with their last offensive. I don't think they will be able to repeat it anytime soon. 3. Spain hesitates and, I fear, will only come over to

our side when the outcome of the whole war has been decided. 4. In Syria, French resistance is unlikely to last long with or without our help.

5. There can be no talk of an attack on Egypt before autumn. But, given the general situation, I consider it necessary to think about the concentration of combat-ready troops in Tripoli, which, if necessary, can be sent to the West. It goes without saying, Duce, that these considerations must be kept completely silent, otherwise we will not be able to hope that France will allow the transport of weapons through its ports.

6. Whether America enters the war or not is immaterial, as she already supports our enemies with all the forces she can mobilize.

7. The situation in England itself is bad, the supply of food and raw materials is constantly deteriorating. The will to fight is fed, in essence, only by hopes. These hopes are based solely on two factors: Russia and America. We do not have the ability to eliminate America. But to exclude Russia is in our power.

The liquidation of Russia will at the same time mean an enormous relief of Japan's position in East Asia and thereby create an opportunity to greatly complicate the actions of the Americans with the help of

Japanese intervention.

Under these conditions, I decided, as I have already mentioned, to put an end to the hypocritical game of the Kremlin. I believe, i.e. I am convinced that in this struggle,

which will eventually free Europe from great danger for the future, Finland will take part, as well as Rumania. General Maras said that you, Duce, will also field at least a corps. If you have such an intention, Duce - I accept it, of course, with a grateful heart - then there will be enough time for its implementation, because in this vast theater of military operations it will not be possible to launch an offensive everywhere at the same time. Decisive assistance, Duce, you can give by increasing your forces in North Africa, if possible, with the prospect of an offensive from Tripoli to the west; that you, further, will begin to create a grouping of troops, even if at first a small one, which, in the event of France breaking the treaty, will immediately be able to join it together with us and, finally, by the fact that you will intensify, first of all, air and, if possible, submarine warfare in the Mediterranean sea. As for the protection of territories in the West, from Norway to France

inclusive, then there we, if we mean the ground forces, are strong enough to react with lightning speed to any surprise. As regards the air war against England, we will stick to the defensive for a while. But this does not mean that we are unable to repel the British raids on Germany. On the contrary, we have the opportunity, if necessary, as before, to launch merciless bombing attacks on the British mother country. Our fighter defense is also quite strong. She has the best squadrons we have.

As for the struggle in the East, Duce, it will definitely be hard. But I don't doubt for a second that it will be a big success. First of all, I hope that as a result we will be able to secure a common food base in Ukraine for a long time. It will serve as a supplier of those resources that we may need in the future. I dare add that, as we can now judge, the current German harvest promises to be very good. It is quite possible that Russia will try to destroy the Romanian oil sources. We've built a defense that I hope will keep us from that. The task of our armies is to eliminate this threat as quickly as possible.

If I am only now sending you this message, Duce, it is only because the final decision will be made only today at 7 pm. Therefore, I ask you cordially not to inform anyone about this, especially your ambassador in Moscow, since there is no absolute certainty that our coded reports cannot be deciphered. I ordered my own ambassador to be informed of the decisions taken only at the last minute.

The material which I intend to gradually publish is so extensive that the world will be more surprised at our patience than at our decision, if it does not belong to a section of society hostile to us, for which arguments in advance have no values.

Whatever happens now, Duce, our situation will not worsen from this step; it can only get better. Even if I were forced to leave 60 or 70 divisions in Russia by the end of this year, it would still be only a part of the forces that I must now constantly keep on the eastern border. Let England try not to draw conclusions from the terrible facts before which she finds herself. Then, having freed our rear, we will be able to attack the enemy with triple force in order to destroy him. What depends on us Germans will be - I dare to assure you, Duce - done. About all your wishes, considerations and about the assistance that you, Duce, can provide

me in the upcoming operation, please inform me personally, or coordinate these issues through your military bodies with my high command. In conclusion, I would like to tell you one more thing. I feel inwardly free again after coming to this decision. Collaboration with

the Soviet Union, with all the sincere desire to achieve final detente, often weighed on me. For it seemed to me a break with all my past, my outlook and my former obligations. I am happy that I have been freed from this moral burden.

With cordial and comradely greetings to
His Highness *Benito Mussolini*, Head
of the Royal Italian
Government, Rome.

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notes

Notes

1

<Additions in the text are in italics and enclosed in angle
brackets>. [The deleted part of the text is in square brackets]